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WORKS

OF THE

Long-Mournful and Sorely-Diſtreſſed

ISAAC PENINGTON,

WHOM

The LORD, in his tender Mercy, at length viſited and relieved by the Miniſtry of that deſpiſed People called

QUAKERS;

AND IN THE

SPRINGINGS of that LIGHT, LIFE, and HOLY POWER in him, which they had truly and faithfully teſtified of, and directed their Minds to, were theſe Things written;

AND

Are now publiſhed as a thankful Teſtimony of the Goodneſs of the LORD unto him, and for the Benefit of others.

" They alſo that erred in Spirit, ſhall know Underſtanding; and they that mur-
" mured, ſhall learn Doctrine." Iſai. xxix. 24.

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THE

ROOT OF POPERY STRUCK AT,

AND THE TRUE

Ancient Apoſtolick Foundation diſcovered;

IN SOME

PROPOSITIONS to the PAPISTS,

CONCERNING

FALLIBILITY and INFALLIBILITY,

WHICH

Cut down the uncertain, and manifeſt the certain Way of receiving and growing up into the TRUTH.

ALSO,

Some CONSIDERATIONS concerning the True and Falſe CHURCH and MINISTRY, with the State of each ſince the Days of the APOSTLES,

HELD FORTH

In true Love and Pity to the Souls of the PAPISTS, that they may Hear and Conſider, and not Miſtake and Stumble at the ROCK OF AGES, whereupon the PROPHETS, APOSTLES, and whole FLOCK of GOD throughout all Generations, have been built.

There is likewiſe ſomewhat added

Concerning the GROUND of ERROR, and the Way to TRUTH and UNITY, for the Sake of ſuch as are more Spiritual, and have been more inwardly exerciſed in ſearching after TRUTH.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

In vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. Mat. xv. 9.

THE PREFACE.

THE myſtery of iniquity (which overſpread the earth under the ſhape and appearance of holy church, and holy worſhip) did begin to work in the apoſtles days, 2 Theſ. ii. 7. And this was the way whereby the god of this world did deceive; he endeavoured to blind mens minds, to put out their right eye, 2 Cor. iv. 4. to draw from the Spirit, from the anointing, 1 John ii. 26. to rob of the eye-ſalve wherewith the eye muſt be anointed to ſee the things of God, Rev. iii. 18. And now when he hath done this, how eaſily may his falſe ware paſs for true! His ſynagogue (built in the likeneſs of the true church, Rev. iii. 9.) for the true church! Antichriſt, his ſon (ſitting in the temple like Chriſt, 2 Theſ. ii. 4.) for the true Chriſt! His doctrines, for the true teaching! Mat. xv. 2. His feigned, formal, dead, earthly traditions, for the true everlaſting goſpel! Rev. xiv. 6. His Gentiles, or Heathens (who are ſo in nature, and Chriſtians only in name) for the true Chriſtians! Rev. xi. 2.

"The light of the body is the eye," ſaith Chriſt, by way of parable, Mat. vi. 22, 23. Now if the eye be dark, "if the light which is in thee be darkneſs, "how great is that darkneſs!" How ſhalt thou ſee the goſpel, the church, the Spirit, the things of God? But if that eye be clear, who ſhall be able to blind thee? The devil may come with his deceits, his falſe

church, his falſe goſpel, his falſe power, &c. yea, though his ſpirit creep into the very true form of godlineſs, thou wilt be able to diſcern him there. But if thou ſee with another's eye, thou mayſt eaſily ſee amiſs, miſtake Chriſt, miſtake the church, and ſo believe as the falſe church believes, and fare as the falſe church fares.

Oh! who ſhall redeem the deceived nations back to the Spirit? Who ſhall preach to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, the everlaſting goſpel? Who ſhall open the eye in them which hath been ſo long blinded? Who ſhall take the golden cup of fornication from their lips, and looſen their hearts from the ſorceries, flatteries, and enchantments of the falſe woman?

The everlaſting bowels of the Lord roll toward his poor captivated ſeed, and towards the poor deceived nations; and he is now preparing to build the ruins of many generations. He is bringing forth that power of truth, that demonſtration of his Spirit in the ſpirits of his people, as no paint ſhall be able to ſtand before. He will rend the veil of the covering from off all nations, and the Deſire of all nations ſhall be ſeen by the eye which he opens and anoints; and that which hath deceived, and deſtroyed, and led from the truth, building up a myſtery of unrighteouſneſs in the ſtead of it; even the beaſt and falſe prophet, (which wrought miracles, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhipped his image) ſhall be taken and caſt alive into the lake, Rev. xix. 20. Then captivity ſhall be led captive; and thoſe which have been led captive ſhall creep out of their dens, and out of their holes, into the light of the living, and worſhip the true and everlaſting King, when the king Abaddon is deſtroyed, Rev. xv. 2, 3, 4.

Oh! who ſhall be accounted worthy to be taught by the Lord where to wait for this? To whom will the Lord diſcover the place of wiſdom (the place where wiſdom is learned, her voice heard, and her inſtruc-

inſtructions to life received) which is hid from the eyes of all living? Job xxviii. 21. Whom ſhall he teach knowledge? And whom ſhall he make to underſtand doctrine? They are them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breaſts of the falſe woman, Iſai. xxviii. 9. and chap. lii. 15. They that are turned from man, from the fleſhly wiſdom in themſelves, towards the ſpring of life, they may hear the voice of this wiſdom, which begins in the living fear and power; which effectually turns the heart from death and darkneſs towards the living God; to worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth, according to the pure living teachings thereof; and not after the inventions, imaginations, and traditions of men: and he that is once come hither, as he is true and faithful to the light of life, doing the will as it is made manifeſt to him, ſhall know more and more of the doctrine, John vii. 17. and have his feet infallibly guided into, and preſerved in, the way of peace.

THE

ROOT OF POPERY STRUCK AT.

PROPOSITION I.

THAT *councils may err* (if I ſhould add, *and have erred*, it might not be impoſſible to prove it).

Firſt, In that they are men not perfected in the knowledge, faith, and obedience of the truth, it neceſſarily implies a capacity of error, both in relation to the knowledge, to the faith, and to the obedience.

Secondly, Their doubtful diſputation of things, and long canvaſſing, implies an uncertainty, and poſſibility of erring.

Thirdly, Their way of determining things at laſt (which is by a vote of the major part) is an uncertain way of determination; for it is not impoſſible but the major part may be over-ſwayed by by-ends, and in relation to their own advantage and intereſt, againſt the righteouſneſs and equity of the reaſon of the leſſer part: ſo that the way of determining things by a council is not a certain way in itſelf; but becauſe men know not well how to find out a better and more probable way of deciding controverſies, they judge it neceſſary to acquieſce therein. But the votes and determinations of men concerning a thing do not conclude a thing to be true or falſe in itſelf; they only ſignify their opinion, judgment, and teſtimony concerning the thing, the validity whereof depends upon their

their knowledge of the thing; which if it be not clear, full, and certain, their teſtimony, opinion, or judgment, is of little value. Truth remains the ſame in itſelf, though all the wiſe men in the world ſhould teſtify againſt it, calling it error, or hereſy; and falſhood can never become truth, though ever ſo many wiſe men ſhould teſtify for it, putting the faireſt habit and appearance of truth upon it that they can.

PROP. II. *That the pope himſelf may err.*

The pope hath not greater freedom from fallibility in judgment or doctrine than Peter himſelf had. Now Peter had not only a capacity of error in him, but he did err in that doctrine which he taught the Gentiles, of living after the manner of the Jews; for he did not only do the thing itſelf, Gal. ii. 12. but he compelled the Gentiles to do the ſame thing, holding it forth as a practice which ought to be obſerved by the Gentiles, ver. 14. for which carriage of his, Paul withſtood him to the face, and ſaid, "he was to be blamed," ver. 11. And the council of Conſtance, depoſing pope John, and advancing the authority of councils above the pope, did plainly imply that the pope might err; which might further be confirmed by what the council of Baſil determined concerning pope Eugenius.

PROP. III. *That every man may err in his interpretation of ſcriptures*, further than he hath a certain and infallible opening of them to his ſpirit, by that Spirit which gave them forth. The Spirit knoweth his own mind in every word which he hath ſpoken; but no man knoweth his mind, nor the meaning of his words, but as he reveals them, 1 Cor. ii. 11. So that God is true in all his ſayings in the ſcriptures; but man is a liar in all the meanings he gives of his ſayings, according to his own gueſſings, reaſonings, and imaginings, without the Spirit's infallible opening of his own words to him. So that the Spirit itſelf is the ground and foundation of all true light and knowledge of the things of God.

PROP. IV. *That if there be any light to be found any where ſhining from God, that light cannot err:* for God is pure; and that which comes immediately from him cannot but be pure. All the knowledge which man gathers, or can gather, into his veſſel, he may pollute; but what iſſueth from the ſpring is pure, and of a perfect nature, James i. 17.

PROP. V. *That there muſt neceſſarily be ſuch a light communicated to all men ſince the fall,* that they may believe thereby, come to the knowledge of the truth, and be ſaved: which I prove thus;

1. From the will of God. The apoſtle ſaith expreſsly, that "God would have all men to be ſaved, "and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4. Why then there muſt neceſſarily be ſomewhat diſpenſed from God to all men, ſufficient to bring them to the "knowledge of the truth," that they may be "ſaved."

2. From what is found in man. There is found in man a light ſhining in his darkneſs, John i. 5. a light diſcovering the darkneſs, and drawing from it; ſomewhat which checks and reproves the ſinner, but never conſented to the evil of his heart and ways. This is of God; this is from God; this is pure; this is ſpiritual; not of the fleſhly, not of the natural; for then it might be drawn ſome time or other to conſent to ſome of the corrupt deſires of the natural; but though the conſcience be ever ſo much defiled, yet the light in itſelf can never be defiled. Indeed a man may ſet up that for light in his conſcience, which may be darkneſs; but God's light, God's witneſs there, can never be bribed, but will ſpeak truly, (when God at any time awakeneth, or raiſeth it up) witneſſing for him, both againſt the evil of the man, and againſt the ſearedneſs, hardneſs, and unfaithfulneſs of his conſcience towards God.

PROP. VI. *That this being let in, believed in, and obeyed, ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day; even until it hath wholly brought out of the error into the truth.* Every way of it is infallible, and every ſtep of the creature

creature after it is infallible. Indeed the creature's reaſonings and conſultations about it may be fallible; but the light is infallible in itſelf: and ſo far as there is a pure, ſimple, naked thing begotten by it (for it is of a begetting nature, James i. 17, 18.) ſo far there is an acknowledgment of its certainty in the creature. There are ſome things that all the men of the earth certainly know to be evil, by means of its ſhining; and ſome things alſo that they certainly know to be good; and at ſome times there is a will begotten in them towards the good, and againſt the evil: now if they did honeſtly wait in the ſingleneſs of this will, breathing to the God of power to have it brought to victory in them, the light would ſhine more and more from his preſence; and in the light, the power and ſaving arm would ariſe; which would effectually lead out of the death and captivity, into the fellowſhip and freedom of the life.

PROP. VII. *That nothing leſs can lead unto eternal life than an eternal light in man's ſpirit*, where the darkneſs is; which is to be diſcovered there, ſubdued there, and to be led from. This was the apoſtles meſſage, (who received and came with the meſſage of the goſpel) "that God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at "all." 1 John i. 5. And this they preached to bring men into fellowſhip with this light, ver. 3. that they might walk with God in it, and there be cleanſed by the blood of Jeſus through it, ver. 7. Which that they might obtain, they muſt firſt be turned from darkneſs to it, Acts xxvi. 18. and from the power and kingdom of Satan to the ſeed of the kingdom of God, Mat. xxiii. 31. which Chriſt told the Phariſees was within them, Luke xvii. 21. And the apoſtle Paul told the Hebrews, that the laws of the covenant, whereof Chriſt was the Miniſter and Mediator, were, by the tenor of the new covenant, to be written in the heart and mind by the Spirit; and not to be written outwardly, as that covenant was which God made with the Jews by Moſes, Heb. viii. 6, &c. which was not the eternal covenant itſelf, but a ſhadow of it; which

which made nothing perfect, but only made way for the hope of a better covenant, by which believers draw nigh to God, Heb. vii. 19. Yea, Moſes himſelf tells the Jews, that the commandment of life, the Word Eternal (according to faith wherein, and obedience whereto, they were to live or die eternally) was within them, Deut. xxx. 14, 15. And Paul tells the church at Rome, that this was the word of faith which they preached; that it was alſo the covenant of life and death under the goſpel, Rom. x. 8. Chriſt is the light of the world, John viii. 12. or the Eternal Word, John i. 1. which Light or Word ſpeaks within every man's conſcience. He that believes in it, brings his deeds to it, and obeys it, is juſtified by it; but he that hates its reproof, is condemned by it, John iii. 20, 21. and not only ſhut out of life, but out of the very ways to it; for the reproofs of the inſtruction of this wiſdom are the ſole way or path of life to the ſinner. Prov. vi. 23.

Now behold the true certainty of the everlaſting foundation, and behold your own uncertainty. See the Rock of ages, whereupon the prophets, apoſtles, and all the ſaints have been built. See that which indeed is infallible; and ceaſe from man, who is vain, and ſubject to vanity and error. The church of the Jews did err; the churches of the Gentiles alſo did err, even in the apoſtles days; inſomuch as their candleſtick was threatened to be removed, and was ſoon removed; yea, the apoſtle particularly foretold the ſaints at Rome concerning the Gentiles, that their ſtanding was by faith; and that if they continued not in God's goodneſs, they ſhould alſo be cut off, as the Jews were, Rom. xi. 20, 22. Now there was not a ſtanding in the faith, but a general backſliding and falling away from the faith; and then the man of ſin was revealed, and Chriſt and his truth withdrawn; ſtrong deluſion, deceit, and falſe appearances of truth ſtarting up inſtead thereof, 2 Theſſ. ii. 3, 11. For the Lord God, upon the great defection and apoſtaſy of the Gentiles, ſeparates the outward court from his temple,

temple, altar, and ſpiritual worſhippers; which temple was his true church, which he reſerved for himſelf, giving the outward court to the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 1, 2. And then the true church fled into the wilderneſs, where ſhe had a place prepared of God for her; and ſo the Gentile-Chriſtians could build up their falſe churches in the cities or palaces where the true church had been built by God, and appeared before. And theſe falſe churches may eaſily become much larger than the true church ever was; for while the Lord built the church by his Spirit, he built only of ſpiritual ſtones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. adding to it ſuch as he firſt converted, Acts ii. 47. For ſuch alone are fit to worſhip him in Spirit and truth, and ſuch alone he ſeeks out to make up his church of, inſtead of the Jews, whom he had caſt off from being a church and people to him, John iv. 23. But when man comes to build, he takes in more largely than God allows; he may gather in or force a whole city or nation to become a church, by perſuading or compelling them to receive the doctrine and tradition which he preſcribes, and by ſetting up an outward knowledge, policy, and government, according to man, and in the wiſdom of man, which the human part will anſwer to, and be ſatisfied with. To make this a little more manifeſt to ſuch as in ſimplicity of heart deſire to know the mind of God in this reſpect, and the true ſtate of the church ſince the days of the apoſtles, conſider theſe things following:

1. God, in thoſe days, ſent his true apoſtles and miniſters with the everlaſting goſpel, which was the word of faith which they preached, to gather men of Jeruſalem, Judea, and all nations, into the obedience of the faith, Rom. i. 5. that he might have a ſpiritual houſe, a ſpiritual people, to worſhip him, inſtead of thoſe outward worſhippers whom he then caſt off, John iv. 23.

2. That this gathered people in Judea, at Jeruſalem, at Corinth, at Epheſus, at Coloſs, at Philippi, at Rome, &c. were his ſeveral churches or congregations;

tions; and not the city of Jeruſalem, not the city of Corinth, Epheſus, Rome, &c. None of theſe were churches; but only a ſelect remnant gathered out of theſe.

3. That the devil, after he had ſtirred up the Jews every where, and the heathens as much as he could, to cry out againſt the truth, and ſuch as God had converted to the faith, for hereſy and a ſect, and to perſecute them and it, yet could not prevail that way; then he tried another way, ſending his meſſengers abroad, clothing them as angels of light; teaching them alſo to preach Chriſt, and the doctrine of the goſpel; and ſo transforming themſelves under this colour, ſecretly to ſow the ſeeds of diviſion, error, and hereſy in the church.

4. When this would not do, but theſe were diſcovered and judged (by the power and preſence of the light of the Spirit in the church) for falſe Jews, falſe apoſtles, deceitful workers, miniſters of Satan, &c. Rev. iii. 9. and chap. ii. 3. then they ſeparate themſelves from the church, Jude 19. and make up a body of their own, go out into the world, preach there, gather a company there, get the greater number, and then ſet upon the church, fight with her, overcome her and her miniſtry, and get up their own falſe church and miniſtry. Thus the ſynagogue of Satan and his miniſtry got footing in the world, even in the very ſame cities and places where the church had newly had dominion before. And now, whereas before there was a church at Jeruſalem, a church at Rome, a church at Epheſus, &c. when the ſynagogue of Satan is ſet up, and hath got the dominion there, the whole city of Jeruſalem, or the whole city of Rome, &c. can then become a church. To make this yet more manifeſt, obſerve and weigh theſe things following in the balance of the true ſanctuary:

1. The falſe prophets, the falſe apoſtles, which had crept into the church, Jude 4. which ſtrived to ſeduce the church, 1 John ii. 26. theſe went out from

from the church, ver. 19. and went into the world, 1 John iv. 1.

2. When they went out into the world, their intent was to leaven the world with their doctrine, and to gather people after them. They preached to gather people to them, and their doctrine, and form of godlineſs, as the apoſtles preached to gather people to God, and his living truth.

3. The world heard them; they hearkened to their doctrine; were willing to be gathered by them, owning their falſe miniſtry, and their falſe church, or ſynagogue; even as thoſe that were of God hearkened to the apoſtles, and owned the truth, 1 John iv. 6. So that here were now two diſtinct bodies in cities and places where the goſpel had come: a body of the true ſaints and true apoſtles; a body of the falſe apoſtles and miniſters, of the deceitful workers, who ſhewed miracles and wonders, and had all manner of deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs on their ſide, 2 Theſſ. ii. 9, 10. Thus there was a great diviſion and breach in the places where the goſpel had been preached, and had reigned in power: for he that was of God heard the true apoſtles, and kept to the true church; but thoſe that were not of God, but of the worldly ſpirit, heard the falſe apoſtles and falſe miniſters, and ſo joined to the ſynagogue of Satan, 1 John iv. 6. where Satan had his ſeat and dwelling, Rev. ii. 13. even as Chriſt dwelleth and ſitteth in his temple the church.

4. Theſe falſe apoſtles and miniſters, with the help of the world, which they had gathered in unto them, joined together againſt the true church and her ſeed (as wherever the two contrary ſpirits and principles appear, they cannot but contend and fight againſt each other; the one for the faith and truth of the goſpel; the other againſt that which is true, and for a counterfeit of it); ſo, Rev. xii. there is Michael and his angels fighting on the ſide of the true church; there is the dragon and his angels fighting for the falſe church. Now mark who prevails: the true church, Michael and his angels, prevail one way; the falſe church,

church, the ſynagogue of Satan, the dragon and his angels, prevail another way.

Queſt. *How doth the true church prevail?*

Anſw. Thus: ſhe keeps all the ſpiritual, inviſible, holy things of God from the paw of the dragon, and of all thoſe falſe worſhippers. The inviſible Jew, the inviſible life and power, that whereof God had built up his church, is preſerved by him; and againſt his life and Spirit, and his church (which he builds by his Spirit, and preſerves in it) all the powers of darkneſs cannot prevail; but do they all what they can, the man-child is caught up to God; and the church, by God's help, flies from the face of the dragon into the wilderneſs, where ſhe is fed forty-two months, or twelve hundred and ſixty days, which is the time of the dragon's prevailing outwardly, by his falſe church and miniſtry, Rev. xii.

Queſt. *How doth the dragon and falſe church prevail?*

Anſw. By putting the man-child and true church to flight; by gaining the church's ground, ſetting up his ſynagogue (or falſe repreſentation of the true church) where the true church had ſtood before. For the true church being fled into the wilderneſs, the field was left to him; and there he ſets up his falſe ſynagogue, in the ſight of the world, calling her the true church, and her ſeed the true catholicks; but caſting a flood of reproach after the woman, reviling her (who indeed was the true church) for a ſtrumpet, and all her ſeed for ſeducers, ſchiſmaticks, hereticks, &c. even ſuch as were not fit to be ſuffered in the earth, but to be made war with, both by the ſpiritual and civil ſword, Rev. xii. 15, 17.

Thus then was the victory on each hand: the true church and temple (with the inward power of life) was preſerved by God; who cauſed it, by the wings of his Spirit, to fly out of the ſight of falſe worſhippers and imitators, as far as that is from the ſight of men in a city, which flieth out of the city into a wilderneſs. And to the other is left the outward court to worſhip in; the profeſſion, the attire, the garments, the

the visible observations and practices wherein the church before had appeared, and in which she did once truly and spiritually worship: for the church did acceptably worship in the outward court, before it was measured and divided from the inward temple, and given to the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 2.

Quest. *Now how long was this false church to stand?*

Answ. Till the church's coming out of the wilderness in the same Spirit and power wherewith she fled into the wilderness. When Christ comes with the fiery breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his eternal light, then this false image of the church melts and dissolves away, 2 Thess. ii. 8. But till then she keeps her seat on the beast; on whom she rides, and by virtue of whom she sits upon the waters, even upon peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, Rev. xvii. 15.

Object. *But did not Christ say the gates of hell should not prevail against his church?*

Answ. No more they did not: for she had wings of an eagle given her, to fly into the wilderness; into the place prepared of God for her; into which she did fly, and was there fed and preserved, do all the powers of darkness what they could. So that the dragon and his angels prevailed not against the woman; but she was hid from the face of the serpent, and from all his spite and power, who could not come within the bounds of her heaven in the wilderness, but was cast out into the earth, and his angels with him, Rev. xii. 8, 9. But Christ did not say that the gates of hell should not prevail against her outward estate; but the contrary, in this very prophecy of John, is here declared; to wit, that she was so far prevailed against: the true woman, who was "clothed with "the sun, and had the moon under her feet, and was "crowned with a crown of twelve stars," was to fly away, and give place; and a false woman to start up in her stead; who, with the golden cup of her fornications, was to deceive and bewitch all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, forty-two months, or twelve hundred

hundred and ſixty days, which was the full time the church was to remain in the wilderneſs: but after that time the falſe church, with antichriſt her huſband (who all this while ſat in the temple) were to be revealed, judged, and deſtroyed, and the true church return again out of the wilderneſs into her own place.

Queſt. *Why would God ſuffer his church thus to be prevailed againſt, thus to be baniſhed and driven out of the building which his Spirit had reared for her, into a wilderneſs; and a myſtery of deceit and falſhood to be ſet up in her name and ſtead?*

Anſw. Firſt, As a juſt judgment upon the world, (who ſlighted the day of their viſitation, and would not come into the vineyard to work) God brings the night upon them, wherein they could not enter into the vineyard, nor work if they would ever ſo fain, John ix. 4.

Secondly, As a juſt judgment upon ſuch, who though they could not but own and acknowledge the truth; yet did not love it in their hearts, but loved their unrighteouſneſs, their darkneſs ſtill; therefore God removes the power of his truth from their eyes into the wilderneſs; and lets out a power of darkneſs and deceit upon them, wherewith they were deluded, inſtead of the truth itſelf, 2 Theſſ. ii. 10, 11.

Thirdly, That ſuch as were approved, might be made manifeſt in the Spirit to be pure gold indeed. They that held the living truth, and could not be drawn aſide, with all the pleaſures of this world on the one hand, nor with all the dangers from it on the other hand; no, nor yet with all the deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs; theſe did ſhine indeed in the light and power of the Spirit, and were a great honour and crown upon the head of their Maſter.

Fourthly, That darkneſs might have its day, or hour, or ſeaſon of manifeſtation to the full. There hath been no day of any diſpenſation hitherto, but it hath had a night coming after it. There was an antichriſt to be revealed in the power of darkneſs, as well as Chriſt (the eternal light of life) in the living power.

power. Now as long as the true church ſtood, and as long as the man-child was found dwelling here with her, in the habitation which God had built up for them, the man of ſin could not be revealed, but the pure power of life would ſoon diſcover him. Therefore at length, when the full time and ſeaſon of his diſcovery came, God removed that into the wilderneſs which ſtood in the way; and then he and his ſpouſe, the falſe church, made a fair ſhew in the world; 2 Theſſ. ii. 7.

Fifthly, That the Lord might make the name of his Son, with the glory of his truth and power, to ſhine, by overcoming the dragon and this falſe church, after ſo long a time of thick darkneſs, and after ſuch an univerſal prevalency of the powers and deceits thereof. Was it not a great glory and honour to the Lord, to overcome the heatheniſh world, and Jewiſh church and worſhip, by the power of his truth ſhining through a poor deſpicable company of fiſhermen and mechanicks? And will it not be as great (if not a greater) glory to him to overcome the antichriſtian world (after it hath taken ſo long and ſo deep root, and is become ſo ſtrongly founded) by as poor contemptible inſtruments as they were?

Queſt. *But how was it poſſible that ſo great a deceit ſhould get up in the world ſo near the apoſtles days, or rather in the very days of the apoſtles, as this ſeemeth to be?*

Anſw. The falſe apoſtles and miniſters came "with "all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, and with all "power, and ſigns, and lying wonders." 2 Theſſ. ii. 9, 10. And the power of miracles in the true apoſtles might well ceaſe: for the end of miracles was but to teſtify to the world, to be a ſign to the unbelievers, 1 Cor. xiv. 22. But now their work towards the world was well nigh finiſhed, and judgment was to come upon them for neglecting and deſpiſing the day of their viſitation. So that the power of deceit was let up in the falſe apoſtles, and the power of truth did draw inwards in the true apoſtles, which made it very

eaſy for deceit to prevail. Beſides, the falſe apoſtles appeared in an higher appearance than the true apoſtles did, with more glorious diſcoveries; ſo that they could hold forth all that the apoſtles did, (as to the form and outward doctrine) and more too, and could ſhew wonders to confirm what they held forth further. And now how could they chooſe but prevail over all that kept not cloſe to the anointing, which diſtinguiſheth and diſcerneth not by any outward manifeſtation or appearance, but by the ſavour of the ointment? Yea, ſo great was the power of deceit in them, that they drew the third part of the ſtars of heaven from their place, into this earthly building; ſo that they fell from the true miniſtry, and the true church, into this falſe church and miniſtry, Rev. xii. 4. How many then of the inferior and common ſort were then drawn aſide?

Queſt. *Hath there been no viſible true church-ſtate in the world ſince that time?*

Anſw. It is impoſſible for any to build a true church for God, but his own Spirit. And if God removed the church which he built, into the wilderneſs, it is impoſſible for all the men of the earth to build up another true one, all that ſeaſon that God appoints his church to abide in the wilderneſs. Several ſorts of men may attempt it, and each may build up their different images of the thing; but none can recover the thing itſelf, till the Lord by his Spirit (who firſt built, and then pulled down) pity the duſt of Sion, and raiſe up the tabernacle of David again; Pſal. cii. 13. Iſa. ii. 2. Rev. xxi. 2, 3.

Queſt. *What is the wilderneſs? Tell us; that the ſimple-hearted, who long after the truth, may know where to look for, and how to find the true church.*

Anſw. It is not an outward place, into which the bodies of perſons might flee; but a parable to expreſs ſomewhat inward by. And it is under the feet of all the falſe worſhippers, who are worſhipping in their ſeveral buildings in the outward court. That which they trample upon, keep down, and deſpiſe, is the holy

holy city, Rev. xi. 2. And the place where the true church all this while hath been (and yet in a great part is) is there.

Queſt. *But if God's church hath not been in a built ſtate, but lain deſolate in the wilderneſs ever ſince antichriſt and the falſe church got up, what hath the eſtate of his people been ever ſince?*

Anſw. A ſtate of witneſſes, Rev. xi. 3. In every age God hath had two witneſſes, (which was a ſufficient number to confirm his truth by) to witneſs to the power of his truth, againſt the emptineſs and corruptions of the forms which antichriſt had brought in, inſtead of the living power; which witneſſes were clothed with ſackcloth, giving forth their teſtimony with tears; while they of the antichriſtian party were rejoicing in the glory, riches, and beauty of their falſe church, as they could ſlay, ſuppreſs, and keep down the witneſſes. Rev. xi. 10. and chap. xviii. 7, 9.

Queſt. *What did the dragon do after this victory, after he had got his building up in the outward court,* (for after he had prevailed to corrupt it, the Lord gave it to his worſhippers the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 2. thoſe that made a profeſſion of his truth, but were not true Jews, Rev. iii. 9. not of the inward circumciſion, Phil. iii. 3.) *and had got the holy city under the feet of his worſhippers?*

Anſw. He purſued his victory againſt the woman, and the remnant of her ſeed. As for the woman, he caſt a flood of infamy, of reproach after her, that ſhe might never be able to lift up her head again in the power of truth; but what ſhe cauſed to ſpring up, might ſtill be reviled for falſhood and hereſy; and that nothing might henceforth go for truth, but what this falſe woman ſhould determine to be ſo: and as touching the remnant of her ſeed which ſtill remained true to God, keeping his commandments, and having the teſtimony of Jeſus, he applies himſelf now to wage the war againſt them. Rev. xii. 15, 17.

Queſt. *How doth he wage the war againſt them?*

Anſw. He raiſeth up a beaſt out of this ſea of confuſion and wickedneſs, (which enſued upon this great battle and victory on his ſide) to whom he gave "his "power, his ſeat, and great authority." Rev. xiii. 2. He had hitherto kept his ſeat in his ſynagogue, where he had been ſlaying the faithful martyrs of Jeſus, Rev. ii. 13. and had put to death ſuch as loved not their lives unto death, Rev. xii. 11. Now he finds it more for his advantage to raiſe up this beaſt, and to give his power, ſeat, and authority to him. This was the Roman power; which, till it was thus depraved and enſlaved by Satan, was not a beaſt, but more noble and juſt in government than the corrupted Jews were; but now it becomes a beaſt: and this beaſt he ſtirs up againſt the very name and form of godlineſs, that he might root out the very appearance of Iſrael from off the earth: for he got but into the form, to eat out the power; and now, ſeeing the power is removed, it is for his advantage alſo to corrupt and deſtroy the memorial of the true form.

Queſt. *Doth he effect this, and prevail likewiſe againſt the witneſſes?*

Anſw. Yea; as he effected the other. He overcomes the witneſſes after the manner that he had overcome the church (to wit, by captivating the outward man, and killing with the ſword; but they overcome him by patience and faith, in their teſtimony and ſufferings, Rev. xiii. 10.); and this in all kindreds, tongues, and nations; and ſo all the publick worſhip of the earth is given to him, ver. 7, 8.

Queſt. *Why would God ſuffer him to do thus, ſeeing he hath all power in his hands, and could have reſtrained him if he had pleaſed?*

Anſw. This was greatly needful to the preſent eſtate of his people; for by this God raiſed up that which was good and pure in any, and kept life in it; which otherwiſe might have periſhed in the eſtate of that corrupt form, which then had prevailed, and had gotten dominion outwardly over the true power.

Queſt.

Queſt. *But did not this tend to deſtroy Satan's kingdom alſo? For this ſtroke going againſt the very name of Chriſtianity, and profeſſion of godlineſs, might light upon his carnal goſpellers likewiſe.*

Anſw. They could eaſily ſave themſelves, turning about to avoid ſufferings, and crying, "Who is like "unto the beaſt? Who is able to make war with "him?" Rev. xiii. 4. Being already one with him in ſpirit and principle, they would not eaſily differ from him, and ſuffer about a form; eſpecially ſeeing their maſter's intereſt and ſervice ran now another way.

Queſt. *What became of this beaſt?*

Anſw. The Lord did rend and tear him outwardly by his plagues, famines, peſtilences, wars, &c. inſomuch as one of his heads was wounded as it were to death; and inwardly, by the innocency and power of his truth appearing in his witneſſes, which ſcorched and tormented the adverſary; ſo that this engine of the dragon grew faint and weary, and unfit for this ſervice, as he ſtood in this capacity.

Queſt. *What doth the dragon do then, to carry on his war againſt the witneſſes?*

Anſw. After this tempeſtuous ſea was over, he raiſeth up another beaſt out of the earth, with another kind of power, even with "horns like a lamb," Rev. xiii. 11. but "he ſpake as a dragon," exerciſing all the power of the firſt beaſt, ver. 12. ſo that he is the main in power henceforward; yet he ſetteth up the firſt beaſt alſo, cauſing "the earth, and them that "dwell therein, to worſhip the firſt beaſt, whoſe "deadly wound was healed." And thus theſe two join together, to ſet up an image to be worſhipped; and all that will not worſhip this image, (but the living God alone (in his pure life and Spirit) this latter beaſt hath power to cauſe to be killed, ver. 15. and ſuch muſt not ſo much as buy or ſell, who will not receive the "mark of the beaſt, or his name, or" at leaſt "the number of his name;" to which number the higheſt growth and perfection in religion and

worſhip, after the wiſdom of the fleſh, (or man's wiſdom) is to be reckoned, ver. 17, 18.

Obſerve now diligently the place of the true church, and her eſtate, and the eſtate of her children, all the forty-two months. Her place of habitation is a wilderneſs; her eſtate an eſtate of widowhood; a city unbuilt, trodden under the feet of the Gentiles; her ſeed witneſſes, reproached, perſecuted, and ſlain, by the falſe woman and her ſeed. Obſerve likewiſe the place and eſtate of the falſe church and her children; ſhe rears up a glorious building as to the outward; ſhe is a city built and richly adorned; ſhe hath a golden cup of doctrine and diſcipline, of ordinances and worſhip, to hold forth to the kings and inhabiters of the earth; in all nations, peoples, kindreds, and tongues; ſhe is arrayed in purple and ſcarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious ſtones, and pearls, Rev. xvii. 4. and all her daughters (who though they may deny her, yet partake of her ſpirit, and learn to rear up buildings of churches like her) they alſo flouriſh in their degree and meaſure. None is poor but Sion; none is deſolate but God's Jeruſalem, but his church, which fled into the wilderneſs, to abide there all the time of his appointment; and her witneſſes are clothed with ſackcloth, teſtifying to God's deſpiſed and reproached truth, with mourning and grief of ſpirit; and not with that fleſhly joy, wiſdom, and confidence, wherewith Babylon and her merchants vent their wares; but only in the evidence, demonſtration, and aſſurance of the Spirit in their hearts, which all the wiſe and confident builders and inhabitants of Babylon trample upon and deſpiſe.

Now it behoveth all to conſider what this Babylon, what this woman is, ſpoken of, Rev. xvii. which came in the place of the other woman ſpoken of, Rev. xii. what this built city is, which the wrath of the Lord will make deſolate; what this beaſt or falſe prophet is, which appears like a lamb, (and ſheweth ſuch miracles to deceive the earth) and yet is fierce and cruel to ſuch as witneſs for God, Rev. xiii. 13, 14, 15.

For

For dreadful are the plagues, woes, vials of wrath, thunders, &c. which God hath prepared for her; even the cup of the Lord's indignation without mixture; torment with fire and brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 10, 11. and chap. xviii. 8. And who would not fear thee, O thou King of ſaints! when thou comeſt with thy cup of fury and indignation, to empty into the bowels of this woman, which hath been ſo long drunk with the blood of thy ſaints and martyrs, Rev. xvii. 6. Conſider theſe things, O ye Papiſts! Wait on the Lord in his fear and dread; that he may vouchſafe to make known to you what, and where, this city Babylon is; and that ſuch of you as belong to him may hear his voice calling you out of her, that ye may eſcape this bitter cup, Rev. xviii. 4.

The great judgment is already begun. (This we know, who have taſted of it.) It hath begun at God's houſe, and is ſpreading further; yea, even over the nations which have diſowned you, and yet have learned of you to build up a church and worſhip after the manner of your whoredoms. Theſe the Lord will judge firſt; he will plead with the daughters who have diſowned their mother, and yet have gone on in her ſpirit of whoredoms, worſhipping the works of their own hands, and adminiſtering and magnifying the beauty of the churches which themſelves have formed. Now is your time to conſider; now is the time for the ſimple-hearted among you to flee from Babylon, before the wrath of the Lord beſiege her. There are three things in general (beſides many particulars) which the Proteſtant nations and churches have learned of you, which will coſt them dear, ere they be made willing to part with them.

Firſt, *Their taking upon them authority over mens conſciences,* commanding them what they ſhould believe; which the apoſtles never did, but ſaid expreſsly, they had not dominion over the faith of others, but were helpers of their joy, 2 Cor. i. 24. They could not command any to believe their doctrine; but ſpake in

the demonſtration of the Spirit, waiting till God opened the heart, 2 Cor. iv. 2. and would not have men profeſs, believe, or practiſe from their words, but by a feeling of the power, 1 Cor. ii. 5. And when men did believe ſome things, and came into the unity and fellowſhip of the faith, they did not require them to believe all that the church taught or held forth as true, but waited till God pleaſed to reveal further, Phil. iii. 15. Indeed they could command obedience to the faith: what truths the Spirit of the Lord revealed and taught any man, they could charge him in the name of the Lord to be faithful to, Rom. i. 5. But they knew it was God alone who could ingraft the truth into the heart and conſcience, and alſo give the increaſe of it; and ſo from him alone they expected it; waiting in patience on the ſtubborn and perverſe, till God ſhould pleaſe to work upon them, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. and likewiſe on thoſe that were convinced, and had ſubjected themſelves to the faith, for his increaſe of it, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

2dly. *Their abridging mens liberty in things wherein God hath left them free*, and preſſing an uniformity in things which they themſelves confeſs to be indifferent. Now the apoſtle (who had the care of all the churches, 2 Cor. xi. 28.) though he knew certainly how to determine about meats and days, as himſelf confeſſeth, Rom. xiv. 14. yet he telleth the church at Rome expreſsly, that Chriſt was the Lord and Maſter of every diſciple, to whom he muſt ſtand or fall herein, ver. 4. and that every man ought to do as he is fully perſuaded in his own mind, ver. 5. Nay he is ſo far from preſſing a neceſſity of uniformity in ſuch caſes, that he preſſeth a neceſſity of bearing on each hand, ver. 3. So that, in the apoſtle's judgment, the church hath not power to lay commands on the conſcience, but muſt receive the weakeſt in the faith, ver. 1. leaving him to the liberty of his conſcience, and to his ſubjection to his own Lord and Maſter; to whom every believer muſt give an account of what he receives,

ceives, and of what he obeys and performs, ver. 10.—12.

3dly. *Their ſetting up a church-building, government, and diſcipline, by the magiſtrate's power.* This the apoſtles no where taught nor practiſed. They converted men by the power of the Spirit: they cut down errors, hereſies, ſeducers, and hereticks, by the ſame word; and they found the weapons of their warfare ſufficient, 2 Cor. x. 4. they had no need of running to the magiſtrate. But that church, thoſe doctrines, that government and diſcipline, which is ſet up by the magiſtrate's ſword without and againſt the Spirit, that hath need of a carnal ſword to defend it againſt the Spirit, and to cut down God's witneſſes (whom he raiſeth up to teſtify againſt it) for ſchiſmaticks and hereticks, or its nakedneſs will ſoon be made manifeſt, and its ruin approach.

Now when the Lord hath judged all the daughters of Babylon for theſe things, then will he at length begin to plead with their mother, Babylon the Great, who hath gone a whoring from the Spirit, and built up a gaudy church without the Spirit, which ſhe hath defended by violence and blood, drinking the blood of the ſaints, who have been inſpired by the Spirit to teſtify againſt her, Rev. xi. 7, 8. and hath taught all her daughters to do the ſame; to wit, to drink the blood of the witneſſes againſt them, even as ſhe hath drank the blood of the witneſſes that have teſtified againſt her. And though, becauſe ſhe hath had an half-day more given her, after her time ſeemed to be even expiring, and after judgment and deſolation was beginning to enter upon her; though, becauſe of this, ſhe thinks the bitterneſs of death is paſt, and ſhe ſhall now ſit as a queen, a lady, a glorious church for ever, Rev. xviii. 7. yet for all this is ſhe come again into God's remembrance, Rev. xvi. 19. and ſhe ſhall ſee widowhood, and be caſt into a bed of torment, and all her children into great tribulation with her; and ſhe ſhall be deſolate, and naked, and drink of the cup, and not repent that ſhe might eſcape it, Rev. xvi. 11. ix. 20,

ix. 20, 21. This is her portion, from the hand of the Lord. Oh! happy is he whoſe eyes the Lord ſhall open, to flee out of her for life! For the Lamb is ariſen to make war, and his ſpouſe is making herſelf ready for his pure bed of life, and his anger is kindled againſt all the kings and powers of the earth that ſtand in his way; and though they fight ever ſo reſolutely againſt him and his meek ones, they ſhall not prevail, but the Lamb will overcome all; for he is "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and they that are with him in this battle of his Spirit, are "Called, and Choſen, and Faithful," Rev. xvii. 4. And though this woman (the falſe church, in her various dreſſes) is ſo ſtrong, every where getting the earthly powers and authorities on her ſide, that now it may be ſaid concerning this beaſt, in the ſeveral appearances of it, as was concerning the former; "Who "is able to make war with her?" yet there is an inviſible power ſtronger than ſhe, who will call her to judgment, Rev. xviii. 8. and make her give an account of all the ſaints blood which ſhe hath drunk herſelf, and which ſhe hath taught her daughters to drink. And "ſalvation, glory, honour, and power," ſhall be aſcribed to the Lord, for his righteous and powerful judging of her, Rev. xix. 1, 2. And he that hath any glimmering of this in the eternal light of the Lord's pure ever-living Spirit, let him even now ſay, "Hallelujah" to him who is "ariſen out of his "holy habitation," and hath already begun this work, who will not fail to perfect it. Amen.

SOME-

SOMEWHAT

Concerning the GROUND of ERROR,

And the Way to TRUTH and UNITY; for the Sake of ſuch as are more Spiritual.

THERE is no way to become an heir of the kingdom of God, but by being begotten and born of his Spirit; which blows upon the ſpirit of man, breathes life into him, and forms him in the eternal image, John iii. 8. Gal. iv. 19.

There is no way of having this work of God preſerved, but by turning to the Spirit which begets, ſtanding and keeping upright in that which is begotten, and taking heed of the fleſhly wiſdom, which ſtands near to corrupt and deſtroy the work of God; tempting and leading aſide from the truth itſelf, into ſome image and reſemblance of it. And if this prevail, there is ſuddenly a departing from the living God, and a running a whoring after the inventions of the fleſhly wiſdom, which appears in the likeneſs of the true wiſdom, that it might the better deceive.

Now when man is firſt breathed upon, and begotten towards God, there is but a little life, a little ſimplicity, a little light, a little power, a little of the wiſdom of the true babe; but a great body of death, deceit, darkneſs, power, and the wiſdom of the fleſh, ſtanding; and all theſe apply themſelves to overturn and deſtroy the true work of God, by raiſing up a falſe image of it, which is eaſily done; but abiding and preſervation in the truth is difficult, and alone maintained by that power which at firſt begat.

Now

Now the power preſerves through keeping out of the ſenſual and reaſoning part, (where the corrupt one hath his lodging) in that poor, low, little, childiſh ſenſibility of the life, which the Father hath begotten. Here is the entrance into the truth; here is the growth, here is the preſervation and ſafety; which makes it ſo hard for thoſe that are wiſe and ſtrong in the reaſoning and comprehending part, either to enter in, or to abide and grow in the nakedneſs, ſimplicity, and ſeeming folly of the truth of the goſpel. O! what a deal is to be brought down, before they can be truly reached and convinced by the fooliſh and weak things which God chuſeth to effect his great works by, 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. What a work hath God with them to batter their wiſdom, and bring down their underſtanding; which the larger it is, the more it ſtands in the way of his light, 2 Cor. i. 19. And if they be convinced at any time, what an eaſy and natural return unto them doth their own wiſdom find, by ſome ſubtil device or other, to draw them back from the plainneſs and ſingleneſs of the truth, into an holding it in the wiſdom and ſubtilty of the underſtanding part, where the ſimplicity is ſoon loſt, 2 Cor. xi. 3.

In the Spirit which begets, and in the truth which is begotten by it, is the true unity. Feeling that in one another, is that which unites us to one another. Every one keeping to that in his own particular, is kept to that which unites; and that is kept alive in him which is to be united: but departing from that, there is a departing from the true unity into the error and ground of diviſion. And then that which hath erred and departed from the true unity, ſtrives to ſet up a falſe image of unity, and blames that which abides in the truth, becauſe it cannot thus unite: for that which abides in the Spirit, and in that which the Spirit hath begotten and formed, cannot unite according to the fleſh; as that which is run a whoring from the Spirit, into an image of the fleſhly wiſdom's forming, cannot unite according to the Spirit. Conſider this,

this, O ye profeſſors of this age! Ye blame us for departing from you; for withdrawing from unity with you. We blame you for departing from the living principle, wherein our unity with you formerly ſtood, and wherein alone we can again unite with you; and not in ſuch things as uphold a fleſhly and falſe image of the true unity.

Oh! that ye could hear the Lord's voice, who crieth aloud to the profeſſors of this age to ceaſe from man! Ceaſe from man in thyſelf, O thou who haſt ever had any taſte of the pure grace and power of God. Ceaſe from thine own underſtanding, thine own affections, thine own zeal, thine own gathered knowledge and wiſdom from the ſcriptures, with all the ſparks of thine own kindling; that God may be all in thee, and his eternal habitation be raiſed up in thee, and perfected, and thou ſwallowed up and comprehended in it for ever. Oh! what a work hath God to drive man's reaſon and wiſdom out of his temple, out of his ſcriptures, out of all his holy things! He that hath an ear, let him hear, for the ſake of his ſoul's eternal peace. Alas! alas! how many ſtumble at, and blaſpheme that, which alone can ſave the ſoul! There have been many diſpenſations of, but there is but one living truth; but one ſubſtance; but one arm of ſalvation. And he that ſtumbles at the thing itſelf, how can he be ſaved by it? It is eaſy miſunderſtanding a former diſpenſation, reading it in the letter; and ſo to miſs of the ſalvation hoped for by it.

The Jews owned the Meſſiah, (according to the ſcriptures, as they thought) but rejected him in the way he came to ſave them in. Now if Chriſtians have gathered ſuch a kind of knowledge from the letter of the ſcriptures as they did, how can they avoid the ſame error; namely, of owning Chriſt according to the ſcriptures, as they think, but rejecting him as he comes to ſave them; rebelling againſt his living miniſtry, and the pure power and demonſtration of his Spirit, becauſe it appears weak and low; becauſe it doth

doth not appear the ſame thing to them which they expect to be ſaved by, according to their apprehenſions of the ſcriptures? Thus reading the ſcriptures in another ſpirit and wiſdom than that which wrote them, they muſt needs conclude and gather another thing from them than what is written in them; and ſo make that a means to them of erring from the life, which was written to teſtify of, and point to, the living principle from whence life and ſalvation ſprings, and where alone it is to be had.

THE

THE

New Covenant of the GOSPEL

DISTINGUISHED FROM THE

Old COVENANT of the LAW,

AND THE

Reſt or Sabbath of BELIEVERS, from the Reſt or Sabbath of the JEWS; which differ as much from each other, as the Sign and Shadow doth from the Thing ſignified and ſhadowed out.

IN ANSWER TO

SOME QUERIES of W. SALTER's, tending to enforce upon CHRISTIANS the Obſervation of the JEWISH Sabbath, which was given under the Law to the JEWS for a Sign.

AS ALSO TO

Some other QUERIES ſent in Writing, upon Occaſion of an EPISTLE directed to all ſuch as obſerve the Seventh Day of the Week for a Sabbath, now under the GOSPEL. As likewiſe ſome LETTERS to the ſame Purpoſe.

With a Brief Explication of the Myſtery of the

Six Days LABOUR, and Seventh Day's SABBATH.

Whereto are added

Some CONSIDERATIONS propounded to the JEWS, tending towards their Converſion to that which is the Life and Spirit of the LAW.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

We which have believed do enter into Reſt. Heb. iv. 3.

Let no Man therefore judge you in Meat or Drink, or in reſpect of an holy Day, or of the new Moon, or Sabbaths; which are a Shadow of Things to come: but the Body is Chriſt, Col. ii. 16, 17.

THE PREFACE.

THE apoſtle Paul ſaith, "That God had made "them able miniſters of the New Teſtament, "not of the letter, but of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6.

After the diſpenſation of the law, which was a ſhadow of good things to come; and after the diſpenſation of the prophets, who foretold of better days, and of a better ſtate to come, than the days and ſtate under the law were; it firſt pleaſed God to ſend the forerunner John the Baptiſt, in the ſpirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way for the King and his kingdom; and then to ſend the King himſelf, in the fulneſs of his Spirit, to gather diſciples to him, and to furniſh them with a competent meaſure of the ſame Spirit, to raiſe up a ſpiritual ſeed to him, in whom he would ſet up his kingdom, dwelling, walking, and reigning there; cauſing his light to ſhine from thence round about the earth, as from his holy city, founded upon his holy hill of Sion.

Now thoſe diſciples or miniſters whom he choſe to raiſe up this holy ſeed unto him, he made fit and able to miniſter his new covenant, by which it was to be raiſed; yea, he furniſhed them with ſuch a power of his Spirit, that they were able through him to miniſter, not in the letter, as the old covenant was miniſtered (which left the people ſtill dead; nay, becauſe of the tranſgreſſing nature, made the offence abound, and ſo increaſed death upon them) but in

the quickening Spirit, which raiſeth from death, and bringeth into the light of the living, to walk with the living God towards the land of eternal reſt and peace. So that that which they miniſtered was Spirit, and that which they miniſtered to was ſpiritual. By the power of the Spirit, in preaching the living word of faith, they reached through the veil to that which lay in death; they ſtirred up a living principle, and miniſtered life to it through the Spirit, Gal. iii. 5. And ſuch as were born of this living principle, they taught to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to be made perfect by the Spirit, and not to run back to the miniſtration of the letter (as was proper for the Jews in their day) after the manner of the former diſpenſation, but to keep in the living principle, to grow up in the ſeed, into the eternal life and immortality of the goſpel.

Mark well, (O ye Chriſtians, who deſire eternal life) the different way of miniſtration between the law and goſpel! The law was a miniſtration of the letter, in which they were to wait for aſſiſtance from the Spirit, by which they might be kept in the faith of, and made obedient to, the law, Nehem. ix. 20. The goſpel is a miniſtration of the Spirit, wherein they are to begin with the Spirit, and to go on with the Spirit; not to gather outward rules out of the letter, from what is written or ſpoken, but to keep to the living principle, and feel refreſhment to that, in reading or hearing what is written or ſpoken by the Spirit. And thus the ſcriptures being read, or any one ſpeaking from God being heard, it is mingled with faith, and becomes profitable, feeding and refreſhing the young tender plant, the living principle, and cauſing it to grow up into God: whereas whatever is underſtood, or received, or held out of this, feeds but the earthly, and doth but thicken the veil over the living ſeed; to which the kingdom belongs, and to which the goſpel is ſent to be preached, to raiſe it, that it might live, and thrive, and grow up into its ſtature, that ſo it might inherit.

"The

" The kingdom of heaven is at hand," ſaid John the Baptiſt, Mat. iii. 2. " It is come unto you," ſaid Chriſt, Mat. xii. 18. that power of life which was made manifeſt in him, was it; " and this king-" dom is alſo within you," ſaith Chriſt to the Phariſees, Luke xvii. 21. The Phariſees demanded of him when the kingdom of God ſhould come? It cometh not, ſaith he, with outward ſhew or obſervation; it cometh not that way you look for it; to wit, by the manifeſtation of an outward glorious king, to reign outwardly in the commonwealth of the outward Iſrael; but the kingdom is within you. How was it within them? Chriſt explains to them in another place; it was in them like a grain of muſtard ſeed; it was the leaſt of all the ſeeds in their hearts. There were many great ſeeds of darkneſs there, but yet there was alſo one little ſeed of light. It was there as well as the reſt, (though leſs than them all) and did ſometimes caſt ſome glimmerings of light, and of its ſhining in the darkneſs, though the darkneſs could not comprehend it. This ſeed was alſo likened to leaven, which being received by faith into the lump, would leaven the whole lump, and bring it into the ſavour and dominion of the kingdom. Now the miniſtry of the apoſtles was to turn men from Satan's kingdom to this kingdom; from his large compaſs of dominion in the heart, to this narrow ſeed; from his great territories of darkneſs, to this little principle of light; from his great power of death, to this little weak thing of God; wherein the eternal power and godhead is made manifeſt, as this comes to be opened and increaſed by the Spirit. Here light is ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart; where it is to grow up, and from whence it is to be reaped after its growth to perfection.

Oh! how long have Chriſtians (ſo called) wanted the Spirit! How have they wearied themſelves, in running to and fro about the letter, to find out the mind of God, and are ſtill unſatisfied concerning it, and even drowned in fleſhly imaginations and conten-

tions about it! They ſeek to have that ſatisfied which is not to be ſatisfied: they ſeek to have that know which is not to know: they offer to God the ſervice, faith, and obedience of that which he will not accept; and keep that from him which he calls for. They ſeek for the Spirit in the letter, according to the manner of the law; but wait not to feel it in the ſeed, quickening the ſeed, raiſing up the ſeed, and dwelling in the ſeed, whither Chriſt and his apoſtles directed to wait for it. They look for that knowledge, that faith, that life, that Spirit, from words written, which the apoſtle preached was to be waited for from the word in the heart. And by this means they raiſe up ſeveral buildings, and get various kinds of knowledge, each according to his underſtanding and apprehenſions of the letter, every ſort being very confident concerning their own apprehenſions that they are the right; and thus they wander from the city of the living God, and from the living knowledge; building up images, ſome outwardly, ſome in their minds; ſome more groſs, ſome more refined; but all more or leſs, who are not acquainted with the living knowledge and truths of God, but have gathered apprehenſions with the wrong tool from the letter, have ſet up ſomewhat elſe inſtead of the true life and power, (the knowledge of the true God, which is life eternal) the knowledge of the true Chriſt, (whom no man can indeed call Lord, but by the Spirit) the knowledge of the everlaſting goſpel, (which alone is read in the Spirit) the knowledge of the Spirit (which alone is read in the ſeed). Theſe are ſtrange things to the ſeveral generations of the Chriſtians of this age, who commonly know no more of them, than according to the apprehenſions they have taken in concerning them; even from that wiſdom and underſtanding which hath not a capacity in it to receive them, but muſt be deſtroyed before theſe things can be underſtood aright, 1 Cor. i. 19. Oh! that ye could read in the eternal light of life! Oh! Chriſtians, Chriſtians! Oh! that ye could ſee how your underſtandings and knowledge from the letter

letter ſtand as much in your way, as ever the Jews did in theirs; and muſt be broken down as flat as ever theirs was, before the foundation of the kingdom can be laid, and the building of eternal life reared up in your hearts. Be not offended at my zeal for the Lord my God, and for your ſouls. It hath coſt me very dear, what I teſtify to you in the ſimplicity and integrity of my heart; and this I know to be moſt certainly true, that that ſpirit of man, which, without the leadings of the eternal light, hath neſtled itſelf in the letter, got a ſeat of wiſdom and knowledge there, raiſed up a building from thence, either of inward or outward worſhip, will be diſſettled and driven thence, even by that very Spirit which gave forth the letter. And when this is done, and God's Spirit again openeth the letter, Oh! how ſweet, how profitable, how clear, how refreſhing will it be, being read in the light of the Spirit, and in the faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus, which is begotten in the heart by the word of faith, which is nigh there. From that light, from that ſpring (as the Lord pleaſed to open, enlarge, and fill the veſſel) all the words of the holy men of God came; and in that alone they have their ſweetneſs, freſhneſs, virtue, and fulneſs; but how to read the words outwardly written, keeping to that, and underſtanding them in that, (and how to keep out the natural man, with his natural underſtanding, which knoweth not the things of the Spirit, nor can know or receive them, 1 Cor. ii. 14) is a myſtery to them who have not been turned inward to this word, nor have known or heard his voice. The Lord is recovering the myſtery of life; and as that appears, the myſtery of death, under all its paint, (under all its painted faith, painted love, painted knowledge, painted obedience, painted duties, ordinances, and worſhip) will be made manifeſt. Happy is he whoſe inward building will ſtand, whoſe gold will abide the fire and everlaſting burnings of the jealous God, whoſe eye-ſalve was bought of the true Spirit, whoſe raiment is right ſpun; but exceeding hard will it go with that man

whom the Lord (when he cometh to ſearch him) ſhall not find a right inward Jew, as he took himſelf to be, nor truly circumciſed by the Lord's eternal Spirit with the light thereof, but only by ſuch a circumciſing knife as he himſelf had formed out of the letter of the ſcriptures. This is the great miſery of Chriſtians; the veil lies over their hearts, even the ſame veil which covered the letter of Moſes from the Jews: and they are groping after the mind of God in the letter; but the life is hid from them, even as it was from the Jews: and becauſe they alſo ſay they ſee, and that they have the life and the Spirit, therefore the veil remains, and the cawl of iniquity ſurrounds them, ſo that they cannot ſee into that which makes free from it, but remain yet in captivity and bondage to the enemy.

THE New Covenant of the GOSPEL

DISTINGUISHED FROM THE

Old COVENANT of the LAW.

Some QUERIES of W. SALTER's, tending to inforce upon Chriſtians the Obſervation of the Jewiſh Sabbath, anſwered.

Query 1. *WHETHER the fourth commandment, expreſſed Exod.* xx. *be not moral and perpetual, as well as the other nine be, yea or no?*

Anſwer. That covenant which God made with the Jews at Mount Horeb, when they came out of the land of Egypt, was not to be perpetual; but to make way for that covenant, prieſthood, lawgiver, and law, which were to be perpetual. That law, ſo given forth, made nothing perfect; but was a continual handwriting of ordinances againſt the Jews; and the very ſalvation of the Jews was by another covenant, and by the laws thereof, Deut. xxx. 11. by which covenant, and by which law, they might be made perfect, and come to the better hope. Which other covenant is the covenant of grace, or the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, or the word which is nigh in the mouth, and in the heart, and ſpeaks life to them that can hear and believe the joyful ſound of it.

Now that this former covenant was not to abide, but to give place to the other, ſee Heb. viii. which treateth of the new covenant: for God's ſpeaking of a new covenant importeth that he himſelf hath made the firſt old, ver. 13. It had a long continuance among that people of the Jews; but now againſt the coming of Chriſt, who was to be Mediator of a better covenant, ver. 6. even a new covenant, ver. 8. as it had been long decaying, and waxing old, ſo now it was ready to vaniſh away, as ver. 13.

And indeed it was neceſſary it ſhould paſs away; for it was not faultleſs. *How! not faultleſs! Was there any ſin in the holy law and miniſtration of God by Moſes? Can there any juſt blame be found in any thing that proceeded from the Lord?* Nay, ſurely the miniſtration of Moſes was holy, and without blame; but it was weak through the fleſh, Rom. viii. 3. and therefore God would lay that aſide, ſo far as it was weak, and ſuited to the weakneſs of a fleſhly people, and bring inſtead thereof a miniſtration of the law in the Spirit, which ſhould be lively and powerful, and effectual in the ſpirits of his people.

That which God aimed at in a covenant, was to keep him and his people together. Now this covenant was weak on the people's part; they continued not in it, and ſo, according to that covenant, God diſregarded them, ver. 9. Now God finding this covenant not able to effect his purpoſe of love towards his people, he finds fault with it, bringing forth another or ſecond, which this gives place to, ver. 7. And this other covenant, or new covenant, is not according to that. *How not according to that?* Why thus: it was not written outwardly, as that was. "Not according to that "which I made with their fathers, when I took them "by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt," ver. 9. "For I will put my laws in their mind, and "write them in their hearts," ver. 10. And here they ſhall learn the knowledge of God, every one from the leaſt to the greateſt, ver. 11. "So that all "the children of this covenant ſhall be taught of the "Lord,"

" Lord," and learn the law from his mouth; not as it was given at Mount Sinai, (which miniſtration was to the children of the old covenant) but as it goes forth out of Sion, and from the " Jeruſalem which is " above," which is the mother of all the children of the covenant, and nouriſheth them, not with the law of Moſes, but with the milk of her own breaſts.

Now if any think to reſtrain this to the types and ſhadows of the law, they therein err: for the main covenant was the law of commandments, which they ſtill broke, worſhipping other gods, making images and likeneſſes, taking his name in vain, profaning his ſabbaths, and ſo of the reſt. It is true, *the firſt covenant had a worldly ſanctuary, a tabernacle wherein was the candleſtick, &c.* but the chief matter of the covenant was the ten words; therefore the tables wherein it was written were called the tables of the covenant, or the tables wherein the covenant was contained, Heb. ix. 4. Yea, the ten words are expreſsly called the covenant itſelf, Deut. iv. 13. Obſerve therefore diligently theſe few things following in the fear of the Lord:

Firſt, The ten commandments given by Moſes from Mount Horeb were the covenant which God made with the Jews when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.

Secondly, That covenant God found fault with, becauſe it was not able (through the weakneſs of the fleſh on their parts) to keep them to God.

Thirdly, Againſt Chriſt's coming God provideth a new covenant, a better covenant for him to be Mediator of; which covenant was not outward, like the former, but inward, put in the mind, writ in the heart. As the people was inward, the ſanctuary inward, the ark inward, the tables of the covenant inward, ſo the covenant itſelf, and the writing of it, was inward alſo. And this covenant, as it is only written in the Spirit, and in that which is ſpiritual, ſo it cannot be read in the letter.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, That wherever this new covenant cometh, the other waxeth old, whether to a perſon or people. Wherever the law of the Spirit of life is made manifeſt, the law of the letter is ſwallowed up in it, and is known no more but as it is comprehended, and is brought forth in it. And he that is in the Spirit, and hath received the law of life from the Spirit, knoweth not Chriſt after the fleſh; how much leſs Moſes? But taking the whole miniſtration of Moſes in the Spirit, not only the ten commandments, but all the ſacrifices, and other types alſo, here they are owned and received, even in Chriſt the ſubſtance: but the ten commandments, ſo far as they were a ſhadow, paſs away before the Son of righteouſneſs, as well as the other types and ſhadows of the law.

Objection. *But was there any thing of the ten words a ſhadow? Do they not all command abiding things?*

Anſw. Moſes's whole miniſtration (as it ſtood in the letter without) was but a ſhadow of the fulneſs and perfection of that miniſtry of the Spirit which was to come, and to be ſet up by the Son in his houſe, Heb. iii. 5, 6. Moſes's people but a ſhadow of the ſpiritual people; Moſes's prieſts and ſacrifices but a ſhadow of the ſpiritual prieſts and ſacrifices; Moſes's law in the letter miniſtered from Mount Sinai, but a ſhadow of Chriſt's law in the Spirit to be miniſtered from Mount Sion, 2 Cor. iii. 10, 11. The law itſelf which was given by him, but a ſhadow of the grace and truth which came by Jeſus Chriſt, John i. 17. Of whoſe fulneſs every believer receives a portion of the ſame grace, "even grace for grace," ver. 16.; which grace is to be his teacher, both of what he ſhould deny and turn from, and how he ſhould live and carry himſelf both towards God and man, Tit. ii. 11, 12. Look particularly on the commandments, and ſee if there will not appear ſomething of a ſhadow in them.

The firſt commandment to that people, "That they "ſhould have none other gods (like the heathen) but "him only whoſe powerful arm had brought them "out

" out of Egypt." This is a ſhadow of the ſubjection of the ſpiritual Iſrael ſingly in Spirit to the Lord of ſpirits, who by his mighty arm redeemed them out of ſpiritual Egypt. Now muſt they bow to other lords no more, Iſai. xxvi. 13. as they did bow in the land of Egypt (Oh! who can read this!) but bow alone at the name of Jeſus, and be ſubject to the arm of his power in their ſpirits alone for ever.

The ſecond commandment, " That they ſhould not " make any images or likeneſſes of things in heaven " or earth, or bow down to them," is a ſhadow of what God requires of ſpiritual Iſrael in the inward, where all likeneſſes, inventions, imitations, reſemblances of what they have ſeen in the Spirit above, or beneath in the earthly nature, they muſt not make themſelves, nor bow to ſuch as any others make.

And they muſt not " Take the name (of the Lord " their Redeemer) in vain," pretending to the living power when it manifeſts not itſelf in them; pretending to meet in the living name, and to worſhip in the Spirit, when they are gone a whoring from it, and become ſtrangers to it. What ſhould I mention any more? It is eaſy to obſerve how the other commandments were ſhadows of the inward innocency and purity which the believer receives inwardly into his heart from the powerful operation of the law of the Spirit of life in him.

Object. *But may any of theſe laws be broken? If they may not be broken, then they are perpetual.*

Anſw. The reaſon why they may not be broken is not becauſe that the diſpenſation of them is ſtill in force, but becauſe the diſpenſation of the law of the Spirit comprehends all the righteouſneſs of Moſes's law: and the end of Chriſt's diſſolving that covenant was not that any might have liberty to do any thing which is there manifeſted to be unrighteous; but that the righteouſneſs of it might be fulfilled in them who receive his law in the Spirit, which never could be fulfilled by receiving of Moſes's law in the letter, Rom. viii. 4. And mark this diligently, ye that have been

been exercised in the Spirit towards God: the law of sin is nearer to us than any law of the letter can come; the covenant of death and hell (with the laws thereof) are written within by the finger of Satan; and that which blots them out must be as near, even an inward covenant, an inward writing from the eternal Word in the heart, by the law of his eternal Spirit of life.

This then is my answer: Moses's law in substance remains, as it is taken in by Christ, and administered by him in Spirit; but not as it was given in the letter to the Jews: for so it was a shadow, making nothing perfect; but making way for the better hope, for the covenant established upon better promises, for the inward law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; which effects that in the spirits of his people, which Moses's law could by no means do.

Quest. *But what is the substance of the law which abides?*

Answ. The substance of the law is *love:* to love God above all, (above all without, above all within) and to love one's neighbour as one's self. To receive this love from God, and to bring it forth in his Spirit, this is the substance of the law; this is the thing which the law drove at in a shadow. The law is fulfilled in this one word *love*; but that love must be received from God which fulfils the law. A man may strive to love abundantly, and strive to obey in love, and yet fall short of the covenant; but the Lord must circumcise the heart before that love can spring up which fulfils the law, Deut. xxx. 6.

Objection. *But doth not the apostle Paul say*, that by the law is the knowledge of sin; and that he had not known lust, except the law had said, "Thou shalt not "covet;" plainly referring to the tenth commandment, which saith, "Thou shalt not covet."

Ans. By the law outwardly was the knowledge of sin outwardly to the people of the Jews; by the law inwardly is the knowledge of sin inwardly to the spirits of disciples. Now a little consider and wait

on

on the Lord, to know what adminiſtration of the law it was that Paul knew ſin by; whether it was by Moſes's adminiſtration of the law in the letter, or by Chriſt's miniſtration of his law to him in the Spirit? It is rendered in our laſt tranſlation, "Thou ſhalt not "covet;" but it might more properly be rendered, "Thou ſhalt not luſt: for if ἐπιθυμία be properly rendered *luſt*, then οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις may as properly be rendered, "Thou ſhalt not luſt." And he that hath received the adminiſtration of the law in the Spirit, knoweth it thus to iſſue forth from the Word of life into his Spirit. It diſcovers the luſts and affections of the fleſh, which draw from the yoke and ſubjection to the Spirit; and then, by a command from the living Spirit, it hedgeth up the way after the other lovers, ſaying, "Thou ſhalt not luſt." And as the law of the fleſh ariſeth, kindling deſires after vanity, and after fleſhly eaſe and delight; ſo the law of the Spirit ariſes in the inner man, forbidding, pricking, ſtopping, and limiting that which would be at liberty out of the life and purity of the holy law. And here begin the bitter fights and terrible battles and conflicts between the two ſeeds, wherein all the powers of heaven, earth, and hell are engaged.

Now becauſe this interpretation of Paul's words may ſeem ſtrange and uncouth to perſons who have drank in another apprehenſion, and have taken it for granted that Paul there refers to the tenth commandment, conſider the place yet farther, and perhaps the Lord may pleaſe to open it to you from the very letter, even as he hath opened it to others immediately by his Spirit, by cauſing them to feel the thing which Paul felt, and to receive the law as he received it.

Paul (in that ſeventh of the Romans) ſpeaks of three ſtates which he had known.

Firſt, A ſtate of life before the law: "I was alive "without the law once," ver. 9.

Secondly, A ſtate of death after the commandment came: "Then ſin revived, and he died." When the word of life came with its living commandment to ſet upon

upon ſin indeed, then ſin would dally no longer; it would no longer lie as dead, and let Paul live in his zeal and worſhip as he had done before; but it ſlew him, it ſhewed its power in him, ſometimes deceiving him, and ſometimes forcing him from that which was holy, ſpiritual, juſt, and good, and to that which was unholy; inſomuch as he did do what he hated, and could not do what he loved; and found himſelf a wretched man, and in miſerable captivity, becauſe of the body of death, and the law of ſin in his members, ver. 23, 24.

Thirdly, A ſtate of life, after the commandment had done its work in thoroughly ſlaying of him; when that was removed which the law came againſt, then he was married to another huſband, then he could bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4.; then he could walk freely with God, not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit, chap. viii. 4. and rejoice in the life and the peace, inſtead of roaring out becauſe of the death, which came from the carnal mind, ver. 5.

Now when was the time when Paul "was alive "without the law?" Was it not when he was righteous, when he was whole? Then he had no need of the phyſician; then he had not received the wound, even the terrible wound which Chriſt then gives the ſoul when he calleth to it by his Spirit, and giveth forth the commandment, "Thou ſhalt not luſt." When he had "confidence in the fleſh," being circumciſed the eighth day, of the ſtock of Iſrael, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Phariſee; concerning zeal, perſecuting the church; touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law, blameleſs, Phil. iii. 4, 5, 6. Here was a living man; and his exact receiving the miniſtration of the law in the letter was part of his life; yea, but he had not received the commandment yet that ſlew him. Paul was alive yet, and could flouriſh in the freſhneſs of his life, zeal, and abundant knowledge under this adminiſtration of the law: but when God, who cauſed the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhined in

in his heart; when God began the work of the new creation in him by his living light; when the commandment came freſh from the Spirit, (the commandment which was ordained to life, Rom. vii. 10. which the miniſtration of the law in the letter was not, no not to the Jews, but another, Deut. xxx. 14, 15.) then Paul began to feel the ſting of death, and the power of ſin, which now aroſe up in its ſtrength to retain one of its ſubjects, and to keep the ſtronger man than he from diſpoſſeſſing him, if he could. And now how was poor Paul rent and torn, and harraſſed by the enemy, and made to ſee and feel his miſerable captivity, until he had paſſed through the death, and was redeemed from under ſin, and conſequently from under this bitter miniſtration of the Spirit, by his holy, pure, and ſevere law againſt ſin! For the man being dead, the law hath no force againſt the ſeed, nor againſt that which is one with and lives in the ſeed: and this it is he ſpeaks to the Romans concerning, who alſo were acquainted with the miniſtration of the law, as ver. 1. of the viith chap. Now is it not very manifeſt that Paul knew not ſin ſpiritually by the miniſtration of the law in the letter, but was alive without it, until he felt the miniſtry of it from Chriſt in the Spirit? And that ſoon ſtruck at his life, and by degrees ſlew it, killing the body of ſin in him, with its members, and ſo preparing him for the marriage to another huſband.

Object. *But by this then a man is not only freed from the law of the letter, but alſo from the law of the Spirit: for if this law be miniſtered to him till death paſs upon him, and till he be married to Chriſt, then after death is paſſed upon him, and he is baptized into death, and riſen with Chriſt, and married to him, the law paſſeth away likewiſe.*

Anſw. There is a double miniſtration of the law of the Spirit; a ſharp miniſtration againſt ſin, and a ſweet miniſtration in the renewed Spirit. The miniſtration againſt ſin paſſeth away, as the ſin is wrought out; but then the ſweet ſpiritual current and law of its holy and

and pure life in the renewed Spirit is more vigorous and full. So that the law of the Spirit remaineth for ever; but its convictions, its reproofs, its chaſtiſements towards the worldly part, diminiſh and paſs away as the worldly part is waſted; and its ſweet comforting preſence, pure peace, freſh joy and life, increaſe as the new man grows and flouriſhes.

Query 2. *Whether the ſcope and drift of that fourth precept be not to perſuade us to lay by the works of our calling one day in ſeven, that we may on that day wholly give up ourſelves to wait on the Lord, in the performance of duties of piety and mercy, for our attaining of, and growing in, ſanctification and holineſs?*

Anſw. The ſcope and drift of the fourth commandment was to injoin the Jews to keep the ſabbath ſtrictly as a ſign, by forbearing all works, and ſanctifying it as a day of reſt to the Lord according to the law, Ezek. xx. 12. But the ſubſtance being come, (Chriſt, who is the body, Col. ii. 17.) the day and reſt of the Spirit being known, the ſign is at an end, and the thing ſignified taketh place. So that the reſt is now in Chriſt, through the faith, by his Spirit, where the worſhip is. And this in the goſpel comprehends the time of worſhip, the place of worſhip, and the worſhip itſelf, (which are ſpiritual) where, in ſubſtance, all is known, enjoyed, and ſolemnized, which was figured out in ſhadows under the law. The ſanctification being come, the reſt being come, the Lord of the ſabbath being come, ſhall not the ſign of the ſanctification, the ſign of the reſt, (which reſt the Lord of the ſabbath was to give, and lead the ſpirits of his people into) paſs away? Exod. xxxi. 13.

Query 3. *Whether the fourth precept do not as ſtrictly bind us to keep holy the ſeventh day of or from the creation, as it bindeth us to the obſervation of a ſeventh day?*

Anſw. The fourth commandment did not require the obſervation of a ſeventh day in general, but of a ſeventh day in particular, of thoſe of whom it required it: for what the law required, it required of thoſe

thoſe who were under the law, and not of others, Rom. iii. 19.

Query 4. *If the ſeventh day's ſabbath be not moral and perpetual, then how comes it to paſs that it was inſtituted or appointed from the firſt creation, when men by guilt ſtood in no need of a Saviour, nor yet of ſuch a ceremony?* Gen. ii. 3.

Anſw. That it was inſtituted or appointed from the firſt creation, or that God intended to require of man the obſervation of it, had he abode in innocency, is not manifeſt in the ſcriptures; but that God did then bleſs and ſanctify it, (in relation to the ſervice he had for it) that is expreſſed in ſcripture, Gen. ii. 2, 3. And that this was one end for which he did ſanctify it, namely, that it might be for a ſign unto that people of the Jews, (which were the people he choſe to ſet up his ſigns and figures of the inviſible things among) the ſcripture alſo teſtifies, Exod. xx. 11. But what further meaning there is in it, and what relation it hath to all the redeemed of the Lord, in whom God brings about the new creation, with the reſt thereof, (as he did the old) it is better to wait to know and feel in the Spirit, than to be prying into with the curious, ſearching, fleſhly underſtanding.

Query 5. *If the ſeventh day's ſabbath be not moral, and belonging both to Jews and Gentiles, then how comes it to paſs that it was given to all men in Adam, when there was no difference between Jew and Gentile; and was obſerved by command from the beginning, as appears by comparing together Gen.* ii. 3. *and Exod.* xvi. 18, *to* 31.

Anſw. That it was given to Adam in innocency, or to all men in Adam, I do not find, nor do theſe places quoted make it manifeſt; but its being practiſed before the giving of the law doth not prove its perpetuity, or that it was not given for a ſign: for circumciſion was inſtituted and obſerved long before the giving of the law, Gen. xvii. and ſacrificing long before that, Gen. iv. both which were ſigns of the inward, and not perpetual as to the outward obſervation of them.

Query 6. *If when our Lord Jeſus ſaith,* (*Mat.* v. 18.) *that* "till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or tittle "ſhould in no wiſe paſs from the law;" *if he there meant not the law of the ten commandments, expreſſed in Exod.* xx. *then what law did he mean?*

Anſw. By the law is meant the whole miniſtration of Moſes; as by the prophets (ver. 17.) the whole miniſtration of the prophets: and that it is not to be reſtrained to the ten commandments, is manifeſt by the inſtances which Chriſt gives, more of which relate to other parts of the law than to the commandments: for there are but two inſtances out of the ten commandments; but there are four inſtances out of other parts of the law, as may be ſeen, ver. 31. 33. 38, and 43. of that chapter. So that Chriſt doth not only take in the ten commandments, but he takes in the reſt of Moſes's miniſtry in the Spirit, not one jot or tittle whereof is to paſs till it be all fulfilled; but was to ſtand in the letter to the Jews till full ſeaſon, and then in the Spirit till all be finiſhed there alſo.

"The law and the prophets were until John;" from that time the kingdom of God began to be preached, Luke xvi. 16. and both the law, prophets, and John himſelf were to decreaſe, and Chriſt and his kingdom to increaſe. Chriſt, in this fifth of Matthew, had been preaching the kingdom, declaring to whom it appertained, and the bleſſedneſs of ſuch. Now this his manner of preaching might ſeem to derogate from the law of Moſes, and from the prophets, whoſe doctrine and diſpenſation hereby he might ſeem to deſtroy: but Chriſt taketh away the occaſion of ſuch a miſapprehenſion, bidding them not think he came to deſtroy the law, or the prophets: for he was not come for that end, but to fulfil. Wherein he doth theſe two things:

Firſt, He eſtabliſheth that miniſtration of the law and prophets for its ſeaſon, till it ſhould be fulfilled by him the ſubſtance, who was to fulfill all the righteouſneſs of it. It ſhould laſt out its whole day, and ſhould not fail in the leaſt tittle of it (as he himſelf explaineth

explaineth it, Luke xvi. 17.); till the heaven and earth of the Jews paſſed away, Heb. xii. 27, 28.

Secondly, He taketh in the ſubſtance of it into his own miniſtration, and layeth it more inwardly, and cloſely, and largely upon the ſpirits of his diſciples than Moſes had done in the letter upon his diſciples; but he doth not give it out in full, but only giveth a taſte to his diſciples how ſtraitly he would miniſter it to them by his Spirit as they came under his yoke, Mat. xi. 29, which yoke is the Spirit of the law thereof, as Moſes's yoke was the law of the letter.

Now mark yet further: Chriſt does not give out the letter for his law, as it was delivered by Moſes; but requireth ſomewhat of his diſciples which comprehends the letter. As now when he adminiſters the law againſt revenge, from whence murder proceeds, he doth not ſay, "Thou ſhalt not kill," as Moſes had ſaid to them of old time; but ſaith, Thou ſhalt not be angry without a cauſe, nor give thy brother any provoking language, ver. 22. Nor does he ſay, "Thou ſhalt not commit adultery;" but, Thou ſhalt not let out a luſtful look, nor let in a luſtful thought, ver. 28. And had he ſpoken here about the ſabbath, would he have adminiſtered it in the letter, or would he have commanded the obſervation of the true ſabbath, where no work is done, no fire kindled, (nor ſo much as any ſticks gathered to make a fire with) nor no burden borne; but the man-ſervant, the maid-ſervant, the ox, the aſs, and every creature reſts in the ſeed? "The Son of man is Lord of the ſabbath." It is true he ſubjected himſelf under the law; but yet he was ſtill Lord; and he maketh all his, kings and prieſts to God! who being once baptized into his death, know alſo his reſurrection and reign.

Object. *But all the other commandments are to be kept according to the letter; for although it ſhould prove ſo, that believers are not bound to obſerve them by virtue of Moſes's miniſtration in the letter, but by virtue of the miniſtration of the Spirit, yet the commandments themſelves are kept; but take away the outward obſervation of the*

ſabbath, and this commandment hath no fulfilling at all according to the letter.

Anſw. This ariſeth from the different nature of the thing: for the other commandments require or forbid that which is either good or evil in its own nature; but this is but good or evil by inſtitution or command. To keep a day, or not to keep a day, is not good or evil in itſelf, but as it is commanded, or forbidden, or left at liberty in the Lord, and according as it is done or forborne by him who received the command or prohibition, or is let into the liberty of the goſpel, Rom. xiv. 6. So that if the nature of the thing required in this commandment, had been alike with the nature of the things required or forbidden in the other commandments, it would have been as durable after the diſſolution of that covenant, as the other things therein contained were; which vaniſh not in themſelves upon the diſſolution of that covenant, but only paſs into an higher way of diſpenſation, where they retain their full virtue and ſtrength, even according to the letter, though not by virtue of the adminiſtration of the letter; another higher and fuller adminiſtration of a better covenant challenging and taking its own place.

Query 7. *If the ſeventh day's ſabbath be not moral, but an abrogated ceremony, now ſince the death of Chriſt; then wherefore ſhould our Saviour inſtruct his beloved apoſtles, that they muſt inſtruct the Chriſtian churches to pray,* Mat. xxiv. 20. *that they might not flee on the ſabbath, knowing that their flight would fall out more than thirty years after his death?*

Anſw. Great was the hardſhip the Jews underwent in the ſiege of Jeruſalem, by that apprehenſion of theirs that they ought not to do any work (not ſo much as of defending themſelves) on the ſabbath; which hardſhip ſuch diſciples of Chriſt among the Jews, as could not eaſily be drawn off from the law and Jewiſh obſervations, but ſtill were for circumciſion and keeping of an outward ſabbath, might be liable to. Now Chriſt, and the apoſtles after him, were not haſty

to

to withdraw them from ſuch things, but for a time bore with them therein; inſomuch that Paul circumciſed Timothy, and became to the Jews as a Jew; and to them that were under the law, as under the law himſelf alſo. But the ſtrength of the query ſeems to lie in this, *That it ſhould bear the name of ſabbath from Chriſt's own mouth, in relation to ſomewhat which ſhould happen on it more than thirty years after it ſhould ceaſe to be ſabbath.* To which my anſwer is plain, that that may as well bear the name of ſabbath, as Jeruſalem, or the temple, bear the name of the holy place, ver. 15. of the ſame chap. For Jeruſalem and the temple did as much ceaſe to be the holy place above thirty years after thoſe words were ſpoken, as the Jewiſh ſabbath could ceaſe to be the ſabbath.

Now for the ſakes of ſuch as have been truly exerciſed in their ſpirits by the Spirit of the Lord, (and have felt the powerful work of his grace, and a building raiſed up by him) and may yet be further exerciſed, I ſhall add this. Jeruſalem was a type of an inward building in the ſpirits of God's people; both in its rearing up, in its ſituation, in its ſtanding, in God's dealing with it all the time of its ſtanding; and laſtly, in its downfal and utter deſolation. There is an appearance and building of God in the ſpirits of his people, which is to give way to, and be ſwallowed up in, a fuller and higher appearance. But the fleſhly ſpirit, getting into this building, will not give way to the further and more inward and ſpiritual appearance of the Spirit, but will have the firſt building ſtand as the building, and will entertain no further appearance of God, than as it can comprehend it, ſubject it, and afford it a place in the firſt building. Hereupon God diſtreſſeth Ariel, even the city which David built (ſaying within his heart; ſurely "that which I have "built will I break down, and that which I have "planted will I pluck up, even this whole land, ſo he "cauſeth the overflowing ſcourge to paſs even over thy "whole land, O Emanuel"). Now when the enemy enters within the holy city, and within the holy tem-

ple, it is time to flee, and exceeding great diſtreſs will befall that diſciple, whoſe flight is either in the winter, or on the ſabbath day. Do not imagine at this; but if the Lord open it not at preſent, wait his ſeaſon; for the thing is true and ſealed, both by the openings of the light eternal, and by ſenſible exerciſes and experiences from that light.

Thus I have anſwered ſuch of the queries as concern the ſeventh day's ſabbath. Such as ſeem to argue the unwarrantableneſs of obſerving the firſt day of the week for a ſabbath, I leave to thoſe to whom they are tendered, (and of whom an anſwer ſeems ſo conſcientiouſly and zealouſly deſired, as I do not ſee how it can be reaſonably neglected or denied) that by weighty evidence of ſcripture he may be reduced, if he hath erred; but if not, but it be truth which he hath therein held forth, the Lord may be honoured in mens bowing and ſubjecting to every truth of his, by what inſtruments ſoever it pleaſeth him to make it manifeſt.

AN EPISTLE TO

All ſuch as obſerve the Seventh Day of the Week, for the SABBATH of the LORD.

FRIENDS,

IN true love to your ſouls, and in the fear of the Lord, I have a few things to lay before you, that the ſimplicity in you may not be deceived, and ye err from the way of life, while ye may be eagerly ſeeking and preſſing towards it: for notwithſtanding that, if with the wrong eye ye be ſearching into ſcripture, ye muſt needs miſ-read, miſ-underſtand, and miſ-practiſe; and ſo thereby will ſtill be running further and further from God, even while ye think ye are drawing nigher towards him. Be perſuaded, therefore, ſeriouſly to conſider (out of the wiſdom from which God hides, in the babiſh ſimplicity of his begetting, where the true life ſprings) theſe few things following.

1. That the whole law of Moſes (the ten words, as well as the inſtitutions about ſacrifices and worſhip) was added becauſe of tranſgreſſion, Gal. iii. 19.

2. That the whole law (the ten words, as well as the ſacrifices) was repreſentations, figures, or ſhadows, of ſomewhat relating to Chriſt the ſeed; ſubſervient to the promiſe, not making perfect, but pointing to, and making way for, the bringing in of the better hope, Gal. iii. 21. Heb. vii. 19. The law of the commandments, or the ten words, did no more make per-

fect, than the other ſhadows or ſacrifices did, but with them made way for the better hope, towards which they were to lead their ſcholar, or diſciple, as ſchool-maſter.

3. That the whole diſpenſation of the law was given to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles, Rom. ix. 4. And ſo not any thing there written bindeth the Gentiles (as there written) but only the Jews. God had another way of making his mind known to the Gentiles, Rom. i, 19.—ii. 15. According to which he would judge them, ver. 12. And not by the law written, which was given to the Jews, which ſpake not to the Gentiles, but to the Jews, who were under it, Rom. iii. 19.

4. That the duration of this diſpenſation of Moſes's law in the letter, was till Chriſt, the ſeed, ſhould come and fulfil it, Gal. iii. 19. and 24, 25. Moſes's family, with all the laws thereof, were to prepare for Chriſt the ſeed, and to give way to him when he came; for when that diſpenſation, which was figured out, is come; then that diſpenſation which did figure it out, is at an end, Heb. iii. 5, 6. Chriſt came to do the will, to keep and fulfil the whole law, and ſo to put an end to that diſpenſation of it, Pſa. xl. Rom. x. 4. And ſo he taketh away the firſt adminiſtration of the law, which was in the letter, that he might eſtabliſh the ſecond, which is in the Spirit, Heb. x. 9. 2 Cor. iii. 7—11.

This then is the truth, as it is in Jeſus, concerning this thing; that Chriſt coming in the fleſh, and fulfilling all the righteouſneſs, (as well of the ten commandments as of the ſacrifices) puts an end to that diſpenſation wholly; ſo that henceforth both Jews and Gentiles are to come to him, to hear his voice; "This is my beloved Son, hear him." And Moſes foretold, that when that prophet came, he was to be heard in all things; whoſe whole miniſtration was but to figure out what the Son was afterwards to fulfil in Spirit, Heb. iii. 5. who would be faithful to give forth the entire law and ſubſtance of life to his houſe or family of believers, as Moſes was faithful to give the

the entire ſhadow to his houſe or family, of that nation of the Jews, ver. 6. So that here, in the goſpel, Chriſt being come, the new covenant and law in the Spirit takes place, and not the old covenant or law in the letter. And this law is more inward, more full, more cloſe, more ſpiritual, and more laſting, than the miniſtration of Moſes's law to them of old time was, Gal. iii. 25, &c. And it is the miniſtration of this law of the Spirit, which is not to paſs away from the diſciples of Chriſt, until all be fulfilled; but is to remain a ſword againſt every luſt and deſire of the fleſh in them, until they all, with the very root of them, be thereby cut down, Mat. iii. 12. Heb. iv. 12. Mat. v. 17, 18.

Queſt. *But what were the ten commandments a figure or ſhadow of?*

Anſw. The tables of ſtone were a repreſentation or figure of the fleſhly tables of the heart, wherein the new law of the covenant of life is written.

The writing of the law of commandments in the tables of ſtone, was a figure of the writing of the new law by the finger of God's Spirit in the heart. The outward writing in the outward tables, was a figure of the inward writing in the inward tables.

The law itſelf of commandments, which was written in thoſe tables, was a figure of the law of life which is to be written in theſe tables.

And this law thus received, thus written, is eaſily fulfilled; whereas the law in the letter, becauſe of the weakneſs of the fleſh, was very hard to be fulfilled, and generally proved an hand-writing of ordinances againſt the Jews: for he that was guilty of one, was guilty of all, and ſo upon every tranſgreſſion had the force and ſtrength of the whole law againſt him. And whoſoever now runs back to the law in the letter, to take up any command as held forth in it, and ſo making himſelf a debtor thereto, will be found a breaker thereof in ſpirit, even one that hath more gods than the Lord, a maker of images, or likeneſſes of things in heaven, or things in earth, if not of both; a taker

of

of the name in vain, a profaner of the ſabbath, &c. For he that hath not received the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, knoweth not the Lord of life to be the only true God, but maketh images in his mind, and taketh his name in vain, not feeling the living power thereof; nor can keep his ſabbath (ceaſing from ſin, forbearing his own works, his own willing and running, and entering into the reſt of the goſpel): for there is but one day of reſt holy to the Lord; all the ſabbaths of the law were but ſigns of it, having but a ſignificative or repreſentative holineſs; but the day of redemption which the Lord hath made, Pſa. cxviii. 24. (in which his redeemed rejoice, and reſt to him) that hath the true holineſs. This was it which came by Chriſt, the other came by Moſes, John i. 17. Moſes's family or children were to keep that day, (that was the day for the ſervants, who were to be exerciſed under the ſhadows) but the believers are to keep this day in the Spirit, to enter into this reſt by the faith, Heb. iv. and to worſhip the Father in it, in the Spirit and in the truth, on the mountain of his holineſs, John iv. 23. whereof the other mountain, temple, worſhip, and day was but a ſhadow.

Now the ſum or ſubſtance of this law of the Spirit may outwardly be ſignified in divers ſhort words; as love, that comprehends the whole of it: ſo doth fear; there is the whole wiſdom and courſe of the life comprehended alſo; or thus, "Thou ſhalt not luſt," (thus it was adminiſtered to Paul, Rom. vii.) or thou ſhalt "keep the ſabbath," or "believe in the light, "follow the light." The obſerving of any one of theſe in the Spirit, is the keeping of the law; for every breach of the law is out of the love, out of the fear; a luſt of the fleſhly ſpirit, a tranſgreſſion of the ſabbath, or ſpiritual reſt to God; out of the light, and out of the faith. But if ye will read this in the Spirit, and come to the true righteouſneſs of the faith, which is received in the obedience of faith to the law of the Spirit, ye muſt come to the word of faith; to which Paul directs, Rom. x. 6. by the hearing where-

of

of is the juſtification, and not by a bare believing that Chriſt's blood was ſhed; for it is the virtue of the blood which ſaves; which virtue is in the living word, and is felt and received in hearing, believing, and obeying that word, thereby bringing into unity and conformity with him, both in his death, and in his reſurrection and life. This is the only way to life; be not deceived; there is not, nor ever was, any other. Oh! wait on the Lord in his fear! that it may be opened to you, and that ſlain in you which cannot bear the ſtreightneſs thereof, and with which there is no erring.

From a friend to your eternal peace,

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

SOME

SOME

QUERIES

Sent in Writing, (upon Occaſion of an EPISTLE directed to all ſuch as obſerve the Seventh Day of the Week for a SABBATH)

ANSWERED.

Query 1. *IF the whole law of Moſes, the law of the ten commandments, as well as the law of ſacrifices, were both added upon one and the ſame account for tranſgreſſions; then why doth the Holy Spirit in the ſcriptures lay forth ſuch an antiphitical uſe of them,* (I ſuppoſe he means anti-typical) *the one that ſin might abound, Rom.* v. 20. *the other ſacrificing for ſin? Heb.* ix. 7, 8, 9.

Anſw. That the law of Moſes was added becauſe of tranſgreſſion, is manifeſt from that ſcripture quoted by me in my epiſtle, as well as from other ſcriptures; and one end why it was added in relation to tranſgreſſion, was, that the offence might abound, which would make the ſacrifice of propitiation for ſin appear more neceſſary and more acceptable. And the ſacrifices alſo relate to the ſinner, ſome referring to the ſin committed, others to the thankfulneſs and acknowledgment due for the peace, mercy, and bleſſings of God towards his poor, ſinful, erring creatures; both which were to laſt till the time of reformation from the ſin, Heb. ix.

Heb. ix. 10. Gal. iii. 19. (But that they were both added *upon one and the ſame account*, that I did not affirm; that is wrongfully put upon me.)

Now though both theſe were added becauſe of tranſgreſſion, yet they had not both the ſame uſe and ſervice in relation to tranſgreſſion, but the one was added to diſcover ſin, and to make it appear exceeding ſinful, Rom. v. 20. the other to blot it out, to take it away, to make atonement for it; which the ſacrifices did, making the ſinner upright and perfect as relating to that outward ſtate and capacity, though they could not as pertaining to the conſcience, Heb. ix. 9.

Query 2. *If the whole law, the ten commandments, as well as the ſacrifices, were repreſentations, figures, or ſhadows of ſomewhat relating to Chriſt the ſeed; then what did they in general, or either of them in particular, repreſent, figure, or ſhadow forth, before they were written in tables of ſtone, or ſince they were written in tables of ſtone, more of Chriſt then than now?*

Anſw. That the ten words were ſome of the precepts of Moſes, and appertaining to the firſt teſtament or covenant, all which precepts were ſprinkled with blood, cannot be denied. And the apoſtle diſtinguiſheth the precepts of Moſes under the law, which were ſprinkled with the blood of the ſacrifices under the law, Heb. vii. 19. from the precepts of Chriſt which he writes in other tables, chap. x. 16. which alſo are ſprinkled with blood, but not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood; and he that receives any of theſe precepts out of the blood of Chriſt, cannot truly and ſpiritually obey them, though he may ſtrive much to form his ſpirit into the obedience thereof. Now the time and ſeaſon of their ſignification was the time which God allotted them under the law, wherein was the uſe of ſigns; but the goſpel is a ſtate of ſubſtance, of bringing the life and immortality into the heart, and into the poſſeſſion of believers, which the ſtate of the law ſhadowed. So that they are not ſigns ſince the goſpel, ſince Chriſt put an end to the law-

ſigns,

ſigns, ſhadows, and figures, nor yet before the law to believers, ſo far as they were in the new covenant: (for as the thing ſignified cometh, ſo that which ſignifieth it paſſeth away) though that was a mixed ſtate, wherein God gave a taſte of both covenants, before his perfect diſpenſing or bringing forth of either.

Query 3. *If the whole diſpenſation of the law was given to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles, and ſo the Gentiles not bound to that law, but another way for them to know the mind of God. Then whether that law cited, Rom.* ii. 15. *which the Gentiles ſhewed the work of in their hearts, be another law contrary to that law that was given to the Jews, even the ten commandments?*

Anſw. The law which is the ſubſtance, is not contrary to the law which is the ſhadow, but is the comprehending and fulfilling of it. The law in the Spirit (written by God's power and preſence in the heart and mind) is not contrary to the law in the letter, but is an higher and more glorious miniſtration of it. The one commandment which God gave by Moſes to the Jews, Deut. xxx. 11. which was the commandment of life and death, as relating to their inward and eternal ſtate, ver. 15. was not contrary to the ten commandments, which God had commanded them before by another covenant, which he had made with them as an outward people, and which was to be their rule as to their outward ſtate; for they were choſen by God to be an holy people outwardly, and ſo an outward rule of holineſs and obedience was preſcribed them; but by all their obedience thereto, they could not be juſtified, but only by hearing, believing, and obeying Chriſt, the word nigh in the heart, and by feeling in the ſpirit the blood of that one offering.

Query 4. *If the Gentiles were not bound under that law that the Jews were, which carried the curſe with it; then which way have the Gentiles redemption by Jeſus Chriſt? ſeeing all that are redeemed, are redeemed from the law, and the curſe thereof, Gal.* iv. 5.—iii. 13.

Anſw. As they were under the curſe outwardly, by tranſgreſſing that outward law or covenant, and ſo miſſed

miſſed of the outward happineſs of the holy land, and ſtill met with wrath and judgments, and at laſt utter cutting off, as to their outward ſtate, and as to all their hope from that covenant; ſo he that comes to receive the miniſtration of the law of the Spirit, will find the curſe as abundantly inwardly, even till that he be cut down by the ſword of the Spirit, which the curſe is to; and that brought into dominion, to which is the promiſe and bleſſing. So that the Gentiles find as great need to be redeemed from the curſe inwardly, which the inward law brings upon the tranſgreſſor, as the Jews did outwardly; yea, and find a more heavy burthen and load than ever the Jews did outwardly. Paul, when he was alive in the outward adminiſtration of the law, not being acquainted with the inward, he knew little of the curſe; he was according to it blameleſs, Phil. iii. 6. but when he came to receive the living light of the ſpiritual adminiſtration of it into his ſpirit, then he felt the burthen, and weight, and miſery of ſin, and the curſe indeed; and cried out, "O wretched man, who ſhall deliver?"

Query 5. *If the duration of the diſpenſation of Moſes's law in the letter was till Chriſt the ſeed ſhould come and fulfil it, and the diſpenſation of Moſes's law (ſo ſtated without diſtinction) between that that was perpetual, and that that was ceremonially vaniſhing, and ſo in the fulfilling of it beſides; then what law or commandments that or they were, which, while Moſes's diſpenſation was in full force, is ſaid to be perpetually ſure, to ſtand faſt for ever and for ever, as Pſa.* x. xi. 7, 8. *and when Chriſt the ſeed was come, and had fulfilled all that the Father had appointed him to do, was eſtabliſhed, Rom.* iii. 31. *and not one jot or tittle of it to paſs ſo long as heaven and earth remain? Mat.* v. 18. *and Luke* xvi. 17.

Anſ. That diſtinction between ſomething in Moſes's law being perpetual, and ſomething ceremonial, is not found and proper in this place; for all that was under Moſes's law was but a ſhadow, as in that diſpenſation; and that teſtament was dedicated with blood (with the blood which was a ſhadow) which related to every precept,

precept, Heb. ix. 18, 19. and it was all ſubſtantial and perpetual in what it ſignified and related to. The ſacrifices were ſubſtantial in that ſacrifice which they ſignified, as well as the law and precepts were ſubſtantial in the law and precepts which they ſignified. And as the firſt covenant pointed at a ſecond covenant, ſo the laws of the firſt covenant pointed at the law of the ſecond covenant, the miniſtration whereof is from the Mediator of that covenant, and they come into the heart ſprinkled with his blood. Now the law or commandment, which even under that diſpenſation was to be perpetual and laſt for ever, was "the word in the "heart, and the laws thereof, Deut. xxx. 14. which Moſes by eſpecial order from God, and according to the tenor of another covenant, directed the Jews to, ver. 4. For the law, as adminiſtered by Moſes, in the letter, is not perpetual or eternal; but as it comes from the Spirit, and is adminiſtered in the Spirit, ſo it is ſpiritual and eternal. That adminiſtration was fitted to that people; and, we know, the Lord, if he had pleaſed, could have given a fuller adminiſtration of his law in the letter than that was, as Chriſt plainly intimates divers times, Mat. v. But if it had been ever ſo full, yet the adminiſtration of it in the letter is to give place to the adminiſtration of it in the Spirit; ſo that the adminiſtration of it in the letter is not perpetual, but for the time which God allotted it; but the adminiſtration of it in the Spirit is eternal and perpetual, and there it remains an eternal light, witneſs, and ſword againſt ſin and the tranſgreſſor. And thus it is eſtabliſhed in the hands of the Spirit, after the ſeaſon of that miniſtration of it in the letter was ended; and thus not one jot or tittle of it was to paſs away, after the other miniſtration, with every jot and tittle of it, was ended.

Query 6. *If the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh; and his fulfilling all the righteouſneſs of the law; and being foretold by Moſes to be that prophet that was to be heard in all things (which is not denied by us); but if by theſe he put an end to the law of the ten commandments, and gave forth*

forth another law to his houſe or family; then what law that is, and whether it be contrary to that law that he with the Father gave forth, as Deut. xxxiii. 2. *with Pſa.* lxxx. 17. *which now is in goſpel miniſtration holy, juſt, good, as Rom.* vii. 12. *and ſpiritual, ver.* 14.

Anſ. It is the law of the Spirit, or the light of the Spirit in the heart, which diſcovers ſin, (not only in the outward acts, but in its principle, riſe, firſt motions, and inward nature) giving forth his living commands againſt it. This is the law now, in which the believer is to begin, Gal. iii. 3. and according to which he is to go on to perfection. For as the believer is begotten of the Spirit, and born of the Spirit, ſo he is to receive the miniſtration of his law from the Spirit, and in the Spirit: he receives a gift of faith, a meaſure of faith from the eternal ſpring of life, and that is his law. His law is "the law of "faith." The light of life, which he receives in the faith, opens the mind and will of Chriſt to him in the Spirit, ſhewing him both ſin, and alſo the things of God more fully than the law of Moſes could, though opened by the Spirit; for it is a fuller, a deeper kind of miniſtration, and ſo opens the things which it miniſters more fully than a miniſtration of an inferior nature can. Yet it is not contrary to Moſes's law, but comprehends all the ſubſtance, all the righteouſneſs and equity of it, (as I ſaid before) which it as a ſhadow repreſented, and commanded to that outward of ſhadowy people the Jews. But the law which Paul ſpake of, Rom. vii. was the law of the Spirit, or ſuch a miniſtration of the law as Paul knew not, all the while he was under the miniſtration of Moſes's law blameleſs; but this law found out ſufficient blame in him, ver. 14, &c.

Query 7. *If Jeſus Chriſt, as he is the Son, gave forth another law to his houſe or family; and that law contrary to that that the Father gave forth; then whether there are not two lawgivers, when the ſcriptures ſay there is but one, James* iv. 12.

Anſ. The ſubſtance, when it is ſhadowed out, or when it is nakedly diſpenſed, is one and the ſame thing; ſo that whenever it comes, it cannot be another thing than what the ſhadow repreſented it to be. Moſes's diſpenſations and Chriſt's are one in Spirit; and when he cometh in Spirit, he doth not deſtroy either Moſes or the prophets, but comprehends them; ſo that the law is but one, although the diſpenſations of it have been various: but the proper diſpenſation of the law now to Chriſtians is Chriſt's diſpenſation, not Moſes's diſpenſation; and Chriſtians are now to look for light and knowledge of it in the tables where Chriſt writes it, according to his covenant. So that there have not been two laws given out, but the one law of God hath been variouſly diſpenſed; in and according to the letter by Moſes to the Jews; in and according to the Spirit by Chriſt to his diſciples.

Query 8. *If the tables of ſtone, the writing of the law of the ten commandments in the tables, and the law of the ten commandments itſelf which was written, were figures or repreſentations*; then whether *the finger of God's Spirit doth write the law of God two ways, in the inward table (ſo called)*; *namely, in the heart of Chriſt's family*; *in one way whilſt Moſes's diſpenſation was on foot, Pſa.* xxxvii. 31. *For the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks in the preſent tenſe (which was under that diſpenſation): now is it another way in this latter diſpenſation expreſſed?* 2 *Cor.* iii. 3.

Query 9. *If two ways, then how doth the finger of God's Spirit write them theſe ways?*

Anſ. The eternal covenant was the ſame under the law as under the goſpel; and its tables were the heart then, as well as now; and its way of writing the ſame then as now, even by the finger of God's power or eternal Spirit: and thither the Jews were even then referred for the inward writing of the law, Deut. xxx. 14. So that they who truly hearkened even to Moſes, were to wait on this word, which was nigh in the heart, for the writing of his laws there. And they that hearkened to this law, which endureth for ever, knew the writing thereof in their hearts; whereas the Jews,

Jews, who were very diligent to get the law into their hearts from the letter, could never thereby attain the writing of it there; but were ſtill found breakers of it, and under that curſe which belonged to the breach. Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, David and the prophets, knew the inward Jew, who becomes ſo by the inward covenant, and by the inward diſpenſation of the law in that covenant; and the law which was after the promiſe could not diſannul the promiſe which was before it: but it ſtood good and firm to the children, even to all the ſpiritual ſeed, the whole time of that outward diſpenſation of the law.

Query 10. *If not, then how doth the writing of the law in tables of ſtone repreſent the writing of the law in the tables of the heart; ſeeing the tables of the heart were wrote upon by the finger of God's Spirit, whilſt the tables of ſtone were in full force, and the diſpenſation had not ceaſed?*

Anſ. Though the tables of ſtone, or law thereof, were in force to that outward people of God, the Jews; yet this did not deſtroy his inward people, nor his inward tables in their hearts, nor hinder him from writing his inward law there; but the inward and eternal covenant ran underneath to them inwardly, (even all the time of their outward diſpenſation) whereby they were made inwardly righteous and obedient to God. And as God had particularly directed, by Moſes, to the word and commandment of that covenant, ſo he would not fail to write it thereby in the hearts of ſuch as turned to the word and commandment. So that this was the law which God wrote in the heart even then, and was always the inward ſubſtance, while-as Moſes's diſpenſation was but an outward ſign thereof.

Query 11. *If the law of the ten commandments itſelf, which injoined love and duty to God, and love and duty to man, as Mat.* xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40. *was or is a figure of another; then what law that is that is the anti-type of this law, which in ſucceeding of it, injoins not love and duty to God, and not love and duty to man?*

Anſ. This query ariſeth from a great miſtake, as if the law in the letter and the law in the Spirit could not require the ſame thing; whereas they do require the very ſame thing in ſubſtance, but ſeveral ways, according to the difference of each adminiſtration; to wit, the one literally, of a literal or outward people; the other ſpiritually, of a ſpiritual or inward people; the one requires love according to the tenor of the letter, the other according to the Spirit.

Query 12. *If the owning of the ten commandments, as they are plainly laid down in the letter, be a breaking of them in the Spirit, and eſpecially thoſe contained in the firſt table; then how doth the truth of God written, which is life and truth, Acts* vii. 38. *and Eccl.* xii. 10. *and the Spirit which is given forth, meet together; ſeeing the Spirit leads and guides into all truth?*

Anſ. I do not know any who have ſaid, *that the owning of the ten commandments, as they are plainly laid down in the letter, is a breaking of them in the Spirit*; but he that hath the Spirit owneth the diſpenſation of the letter in its place and ſeaſon: but the Spirit doth not teach them to run from his own diſpenſation (where it is livingly adminiſtered to ſuch as wait on the eternal Word in his covenant of life for it) to that diſpenſation which was appointed for, and given forth to, others. But that the truth, as it is written, (outwardly) is life, I do not read; but otherwiſe, 2 Cor. iii. 6. where Paul ſaith, "the letter killeth" (ſpeaking of the letter of the New Teſtament). The Spirit indeed guides into all truth; but it is the living ſoul whom he ſo guides, and it is the living truth into which he guides in the new covenant; though it was he alſo who gave forth, required, and was able to lead into, the letter of the old covenant.

Query 13. *Whether, when Jehovah gave forth the ten commandments plainly as a law in the letter, he did intend, by the obſervation according to the letter, the breach of them by the Spirit?*

Anſ. The Spirit doth not teach to break the commands in the letter; but ſuch as are under the miniſtration

tration of the letter, to obſerve them according to the letter: and ſuch as are under the miniſtration of the Spirit, to fulfil the righteouſneſs of them in the Spirit. Yet the Son of man is "Lord of the ſab-"bath;" and if he bid a man "take up his bed and "walk," which was bearing a burden and doing of work on the ſabbath-day, it is no breach of the ſabbath. Now this is moſt righteous; that as the Son's reſt ſhould be entered into under the goſpel, ſo the day of reſt ſhould be kept by his diſciples and family.

Query 14. *Whether to ſay, the keeping the law of God according to the letter is a breaking of it in the Spirit, be not a charging of God, that gave it forth to be kept, and the Holy Spirit that incites us ſo to do now in this adminiſtration, James* ii. 8. *and ſays they do well that do ſo; and yet thou ſayeſt they break it in Spirit: but tell us by any one ſcripture, how a man, aſſiſted by the Spirit to own Jehovah alone to be his God according to the letter of the firſt commandment, doth break the command in the Spirit? Or ſo the like of any other of them.*

Anſ. This query is altogether from a miſtake; for it was not ſaid by me, that *the keeping the law of God according to the letter is a breaking of it in the Spirit*; but that he that *runs back to the law in the letter, to take up any command as held forth in it, will be found a breaker thereof in Spirit.* And for this, the Jews in general, and Paul in particular, may be my inſtances; who was exceeding ſtrict according to the letter of the law, but yet was a grievous breaker of it in Spirit; and did not love his neighbour as himſelf, but in a blind zeal was a bitter perſecutor: and if the Jews had taken that direction of Moſes, Deut. xxx. 14. the obſervation of the law in the letter might have been more eaſy to them. So that the turning towards, and receiving the word in the heart, from whence the letter came, is the only way to fulfil the letter; and the law is not ſo much as to be known, much leſs fulfilled, by running to the letter of it in the firſt place. And this I certainly know, that there is no coming to the Lord of life, nor no keeping chaſte to him, but in the new

covenant, and in the light of the Lord, as it is there diſpenſed: and till then, the mind cannot forbear making of images and falſe repreſentations of him to itſelf; though being from the light of this covenant, it cannot diſcern that it doth ſo, no more than Paul, by the letter of the law, could diſcern that he was a breaker thereof in his violent perſecutions.

Query 15. *Whether the prophets, Jeſus Chriſt, or the apoſtles, by their keeping the law according to the letter (that they did ſo is evident) did break the law in the Spirit?*

Anſ. The prophets were under the law as to their outward ſtate; though inwardly not without feeling the virtue of the new covenant. Chriſt alſo was made under the law, and took upon him the fulfilling of that diſpenſation of Moſes, that he might bring the believing Jews from under it into the liberty of the Spirit; that they might receive the adoption of ſons, and the free miniſtration which was appointed for the ſons, and might not be held under that miniſtration of bondage which was appointed for the ſervants. And the apoſtle bids believers to ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free, not making themſelves debtors to the law, Gal. v. 1. For they were children of the promiſe, children of New Jeruſalem, the free woman, children of the new covenant, and not children of Mount Sinai, the old covenant, the law in the letter, chap. iv. 15, 16.

Query 16. *If there be but one day of reſt holy to the Lord, and all the ſabbaths of the law were but ſigns of it, that is ſaid to be the day of redemption which the Lord hath made: then whether that day be a day natural, one of the ſeven days of the week, which either reſpects the day on which our Redeemer ſuffered, or that on which he roſe again from the dead, or any other?*

Anſ. As the goſpel is not natural, but ſpiritual; ſo its day of reſt is not natural, but ſpiritual likewiſe. Yea, I may add this alſo, the ſix days work in the new creation are not natural neither.

Query

Query 17. *If not ſo, but that it ſhould be intended applicable to the day or time of the goſpel-adminiſtration from the time that Chriſt ſuffered in the fleſh unto the end of the world*; then whether *this day, that is intended as a ſabbath, is one with that day that the ſcriptures intend and call a ſabbath, which Chriſt himſelf gave his diſciples charge to have reſpect unto in their flight, Mat.* xxiv. 20.

Anſ. The ſuppoſition here put, demonſtrates that thoſe that put it have no acquaintance with the goſpel-ſabbath; but propoſe another outward time for it, even the time from Chriſt's ſuffering in the fleſh to the end of the world. Now if any ſhould ſo affirm, it were as juſtly to be excepted againſt, as preſſing the obſervation of the Jews ſabbath is. That which ſignifieth is outward or natural, and ſignifieth to that part which is without: that which is ſignified, is inward and ſpiritual, and is known, entered into, kept, and enjoyed in the Spirit. It is a ſpiritual ſabbath, not a natural, which God hath inſtituted for his ſpiritual people, after he hath led them out of ſpiritual Egypt, and teacheth them to worſhip him in Spirit and in truth.

Query 18. *If they intend one and the ſame ſabbath-day, then how impoſſible was it for the diſciples of Chriſt to eſcape fleeing on that ſabbath-day, though ever ſo fervent in prayer, in regard that this ſabbath ſpoken of began when Chriſt had ſuffered, and put an end to the diſpenſation of Moſes's law: and the flight ſpoken of by Chriſt, which reſpects the Lord's ſabbath, was not until many years after Chriſt's ſufferings.* The ſuppoſed ſabbath being before denied, the foundation of this query fails.

Anſ. Chriſt's ſabbath is not an outward time or day in the fleſh; but a day in the Spirit; even a day of reſt from all the labours of the fleſhly part. But this was ſpoken to before, in the anſwer to the laſt of W. Salter's queries, whereto I may add this: Chriſt ſpake to his diſciples of things as they were able to bear them. Now as they underſtood not his death, ſo then they underſtood not the aboliſhing of thoſe things which were to paſs away after his death: ſo that Chriſt

might very well call Jeruſalem the holy place, and the ſeventh day the ſabbath, ſpeaking to them in that ſtate.

Query 19. *If they intend not one and the ſame ſabbath-day, then which are the diſciples of Chriſt to have reſpect unto; whether that that Jeſus Chriſt injoined his diſciples to have reſpect unto, or that that Iſaac Penington would injoin the diſciples to have reſpect unto?*

Anſ. This query hath very little in it, ſave to ſhew the unſavourineſs of the ſpirits of them that put it, and their want of acquaintance with the miniſtration of the Spirit. They that know the goſpel-ſabbath (which is the ſubſtance of the law-ſabbath) can tell who injoined it them; and can alſo tell that he hath not required of them the obſervation of the Jews ſabbath. But they that are born after the letter have been always ſubject to revile and reproach the truths of the Spirit, and thoſe that teſtify thereto.

Query 20. *If the Lord's holy ſabbath be that day which we may ſuppoſe is intended, by this paper ſent unto us, to be the day that contains the time of goſpel-adminiſtration; then whether that ſabbath doth prohibit outward labour, as well as abſtaining from ſin? If not, then which way muſt this ſabbath be kept? ſeeing that they that did and do obſerve the weekly ſabbath, did and do it in the Spirit, and reſt by faith in Chriſt, worſhipping the Father in Spirit and in truth.*

Anſ. The goſpel-ſabbath begins not in the obſervation of outward time; but as it is ſpiritual, ſo it hath a ſpiritual beginning, increaſe, and perfecting, wherein there is a reſt to the ſpirit from ſin, and from the creaturely-works, and a worſhipping in the Spirit; even as on the outward ſabbath there was a bodily ceaſing from labours, and an outward worſhipping. And he that heareth the joyful ſound of deliverance from ſin and ſelf-working, and entereth into the faith, (beginning to ceaſe from his own works and working, and to wait in the Spirit on the power for its working in him) hath a taſte of the goſpel ſabbath, and beginneth

ginneth to see that day which the type pointed to, and ends in.

Query 21. *If that that was ministered to Paul, Rom.* vii. *Thou shalt keep the sabbath, or believe in the light, follow the light, and the observing of either of these in the Spirit, be a keeping the whole law*; then how *are the scriptures observed, if the keeping of one commandment be a keeping the whole law, when the Holy Spirit in scripture says, that he that offends in one point, is guilty of all? James* ii. 10.

Ans. I did not say, that the keeping of one commandment is the keeping of the whole law; but that the observing in Spirit any one of those there mentioned by me, is the keeping of the law: which was not barely said, but demonstrated; because no part of the law can be broken, but every one of these must be broken. He that commits any sin, breaks the gospel-sabbath, which is a resting from all sin and self-works; errs from the law of love received in the Spirit, which shuts out all enmity and transgression both against God and man; departs from the fear, which keeps from departing from God by any iniquity; and enters into the lust, where is the womb of sin, out of the compass of which womb sin cannot be conceived, much less committed. So that Paul, in that law received from the Spirit, "Thou shalt not lust," saw the whole body of sin struck at; whereas before, under the ministration of Moses in the letter (according to which he said he was blameless) there was not so much as the life of one sin struck at; but for all his exact answering of the law according to that ministration, he was alive still. To decide this controversy, let it be put to trial; let any one singly wait on the Lord for the administration of his law in the Spirit, and if the Lord give forth that command to him, "Thou shalt not lust," in the clearness of the light of his eternal Spirit, let him try, if, continuing in obedience and subjection thereto, he can commit any one sin whatsoever. I do not say, that a man's proposing to himself that he will not lust, or his striving

of

of himſelf to love and fear the Lord, or his applying himſelf to keep the ſabbath or reſt from ſin to the Lord, will do this: nay, this is but an adminiſtration in the letter, and will prove weak againſt the inward ſtrength of the enemy; but receiving the law in its pure living adminiſtration in the Spirit, and from the Spirit, here comes ſtrength againſt the enemy, which is too hard for him, while it is abode in. And this the apoſtle Paul taught the Galatians, who were running backward toward the law, and not forward in the Spirit: he bids them "walk in the Spirit," Gal. v. 25. And ſo doing, as they ſhould not be under the law, ver. 18. ſo neither ſhould they be breakers of the law: for within thoſe bounds ſin enters not, but is kept out; not ſo much as a luſt againſt the law being there known, much leſs any open tranſgreſſion againſt it: and againſt ſuch as thus keep within the bounds of the Spirit there is no law, ver. 22, 23. but againſt all that make themſelves debtors to the law of the letter, there ſtands in force both the law of the letter, and of the Spirit alſo; and they cannot in that ſtate be free from the condemnation and curſe thereof, whatſoever they may imagine concerning themſelves, and their own ſtate, from a miſunderſtanding and miſapplication of the ſcriptures.

The firſt Letter anſwered.

THERE is a double miniſtration of the law: a miniſtration in the letter, and a miniſtration in the Spirit. The miniſtration of the letter was by Moſes, from Mount Sinai, in tables of ſtone, to that outward people the Jews: the miniſtration of the Spirit is by Chriſt, from Mount Sion, in tables of fleſh, to believers, or his diſciples. Now this is it which the Lord hath made manifeſt to me, that the diſciples of Chriſt, or believers, are to have recourſe to their adminiſtration for the receiving of the law from the Spirit,

Spirit, and not to run back to that miniſtration which was literal and outward, and fitted to a literal and outward people. This was more fully ſet down in my epiſtle in ſeveral particulars. Now in oppoſition to this, it is ſaid,

Firſt, *That all written in that epiſtle, makes no more at all againſt a goſpel ſpiritual obſerving in love the ſeventh day ſabbath to the Lord, than they make againſt a goſpel ſpiritual obſerving of the other nine commandments.*

Anſ. My epiſtle ſtriketh not at a goſpel ſpiritual obſervation of any thing; but he that will obey ſpiritually, muſt receive his command from the Spirit, in that way which the Spirit hath choſen to diſpenſe it to him. Now the ſame Spirit which wrote his law in the letter under the old covenant, writeth his law in the hearts of believers under the new covenant, Heb. viii. 10. which is a better covenant, and of which covenant Chriſt is the Mediator, ver. 6. and Chriſt is as faithful to give forth the laws of his Spirit in the hearts of his people, as their condition requires them, as Moſes was to give the law written in the tables of ſtone to his houſe, Heb. iii. 5, 6. And as Moſes pointed his diſciples to Chriſt coming in the fleſh, ſo Chriſt pointed believers or diſciples to the Comforter, the Spirit of truth; firſt to wait for him, and then to receive light or his law of life from him: and this is goſpel, or new covenant, even that which the Spirit ſpeaks or writes in the heart: and this hath power in it, and ſaveth; whereas the letter killeth.

Now conſider ſeriouſly, whither ſhould a believer go for theſe laws? To which covenant? To Moſes's covenant, or to Chriſt's covenant?

Secondly, *That all theſe commands being holy and good, are to be loved, and in love to be obſerved, &c.*

Anſ. All the ſtatutes, and judgments, and ordinances, and precepts of the Lord are holy and good, and are to be loved; but each is to be obedient to that which God requires of him, and to have recourſe to that miniſtration for the law of God to him, under which God hath ſet him. He that believes, he that hath

hath received the Spirit, is to have recourſe to the law of faith, and to the Spirit, for his light or law: he who was under the law of Moſes, was to have recourſe to the law of Moſes; for the law of Moſes ſpake to them who were under it in his family, giving forth the precepts, or the commandments of that diſpenſation, to them who were under his teſtament, Heb. ix. 20. And Chriſt ſpeaks to his family by his Spirit, whom his diſciples are to hearken unto, and not to grieve him, or quench his motions, or deſpiſe his propheſyings; but give diligent heed thereto, until the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in their hearts.

Now to obey in love doth not make the diſtinction of the miniſtrations; for love belongeth to each miniſtration. The Jews, in their day, were to obey the law in love, and to have it in their hearts, Deut. vi. 5, 6. But this makes the difference, the Jews were to ſeek to the letter for it; the diſciple is to receive it from the Spirit; for he is to begin in the Spirit, Gal. iii. 3. whereas the Jew's beginning was in the letter. And this is obedience in the newneſs of the Spirit, when the law is received freſh from the Spirit, who both writes new things, and brings to remembrance old things livingly and powerfully: but to go to Moſes's miniſtration, and learn it there, and get it into the heart from thence, that is according to the old miniſtration or covenant, which was given in the letter to the Jews, as may appear in that place laſt cited, Deut. vi. 5, 6.

Thirdly, *That in the ſame Spirit and love that we have the Lord for our God, &c. in the ſame we are to remember the ſabbath-day to keep it holy.*

Anſ. The Lord teacheth believers to know him to be the only true God, &c. by the law of the covenant of life in Chriſt Jeſus, which he miniſters to their ſpirits in the Spirit; whereby he teacheth them ſo clearly and effectually, that they need not run back to the tables of Moſes's covenant, from thence to teach one another to know the Lord; but they ſhall all know him from his teaching, from the leaſt to the greateſt;

greateſt: yea, and I may add this; this covenant by its miniſtration teacheth more clearly than the miniſtration of Moſes's law in the letter could teach, Heb. viii. 10, 11. They that have been with Moſes, and have learned the law of him, under the miniſtration of his covenant, have yet need of coming to Chriſt; but they that have been with Chriſt, and have learned the law of his Spirit, by the teachings of the new covenant in their hearts, have not need of being ſent back to Moſes. Moſes pointeth forward to Chriſt; but Chriſt (even in the fleſh) ſendeth not his diſciples from his own diſpenſation back to Moſes, (though he alſo eſtabliſhed the diſpenſation of Moſes for its ſeaſon) but pointeth them forward to the Comforter, or to his appearance in the Spirit. And this is the mark of a Chriſtian, which it is the intent of the letter to direct him to, and not for him to fix in the letter, as men have done ſince the apoſtaſy from the Spirit.

This argument is further inforced thus, becauſe *he that ſaid the other, ſaid this in the ſame law and Spirit.*

Anſ. It is true, he that ſaid the other by Moſes to the Jews, ſaid this alſo to them, and they were ſtrictly bound thereto; but that which binds the diſciple is the miniſtration of the new covenant, where Chriſt writes this law in the minds and ſpirits of his people, by which they are bound; and ſuch as are out of that, the Lord, when he cometh to examine them concerning their faith and obedience, will ſay to them, "Who hath required this at your hands? Were ye "children of the new covenant? Did ye receive the "Spirit? Had ye a meaſure of faith given you? Were "ye new creatures? Why did you not keep to your "rule? Why did ye not wait on the Spirit, and re-"ceive the law from the New Jeruſalem, from whence "it iſſues forth to the family of believers?" The Jews were to be taught by precepts and judgments from Moſes; but "all thy children ſhall be taught of the "Lord."

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It is ſaid yet further, *So that if thou keepeſt the other, and not this, thou art a tranſgreſſor of the* ROYAL LAW of LIBERTY.

Anſ. What is the royal law? What is the law of liberty? Was the law as it was adminiſtered by Moſes, the royal law? Or is it the royal law as it is adminiſtered by the Son, who is the King of ſaints, and writes his law in their hearts, as their King? Again, was the law, which Moſes adminiſtered to the Jews, a law of liberty, or a law of bondage? Did not the miniſtration on Mount Sinai gender to bondage? Gal. iv. 24. But in the miniſtration of the law by the Spirit is life and liberty, ver. 26. and 2 Cor. iii. 17. And this very law, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour "as thyſelf," is royal, and a law of pure liberty, and there is no bondage in it thus adminiſtered: but let any man now read it in the letter, and ſtrive to obey it to the utmoſt he can, he ſhall find it weak through the fleſh, accuſing and imbondaging him. And this is the reaſon that Chriſtians ſo mourn in their prayers, even as perſons in bonds, becauſe they know not the royal law of liberty; becauſe they feel not the love which the Spirit begets, but ſtrive to get the letter into their hearts, and to anſwer the commands in the letter with what love and obedience they can come at; and this (through not ſeeing into the true covenant and miniſtry of Chriſt) they call obeying in the Spirit. The teſtimony of Jeſus, Rev. xii. 17. is the Spirit of prophecy, chap. xix. 10; and his commandments come freſh from that Spirit of prophecy, which are to be taken heed to till the day dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe, and then a fuller miniſtration is witneſſed than that of prophecy, even the ſhining and appearing of that which was propheſied of, which every believer is to wait for in the prophecies of the Spirit, and in obedience to thoſe commands, which come livingly into his heart from the Spirit of prophecy.

Fourthly, *That the fourth command is to be in love kept by all believers.*

Anſ.

Anſ. All the commands of Chriſt's covenant are to be kept by believers, according as he pleaſes to diſpenſe them under his adminiſtration in the new covenant: but the laws of the old covenant are not the laws of the new covenant, as ſo diſpenſed; but only as they are comprehended in the righteouſneſs which is taught and required by the Spirit, which is fuller, ſtricter, and exacter than that which the law of Moſes required.

Nor do I hereby go about to teach any to break the leaſt of Chriſt's commands, but the way to fulfil them; which is by keeping to the certain knowledge and obedience of them, in that miniſtration where Chriſt hath promiſed to diſpenſe and make them known to believers, which is under the miniſtry of his own covenant, writing them in their hearts and minds by his Spirit. And here the keeping of all Chriſt's commands is poſſible; yea, this is the only way to have the righteouſneſs of the law fulfilled in us; for he that keeps the eye which the Spirit hath opened in him cloſe to the Spirit, ſhall not be able to break any law of righteouſneſs, but the righteouſneſs even of Moſes's law ſhall be fulfilled in him.

Chriſt is the reſt of the goſpel (as he is alſo the holy land): believing is the entering into this reſt; here is his ſabbath, and the keeping of it. Keep in the faith, the goſpel reſt is kept. Parting with every luſt that he makes manifeſt, obſerving every thing that this King calls for by his Spirit, and waiting for the further manifeſtation or ſhining of the light of his Spirit in the heart: here is the obedience of the faith, and the holy and ſpiritual life and ſubjection of the living ſoul to its living King. Here is the beginning of a true Chriſtian, his growth, his perfection; but as for times, places, perſons, &c. theſe are of another nature, to another part; even to that part in man which is to be done away, as he comes into the faith, and into the reſt. Let that which is inviſible, whoſe habitation is out of the reaſoning part, feel and read me in that which is inviſible: for I do not make void the

the law by faith, or through publiſhing the miniſtry of the Spirit; but eſtabliſh it in its miniſtration in the Spirit to the diſciples of Chriſt; who keeping to the Spirit, cannot tranſgreſs the righteouſneſs of it, though they may there learn not to eſteem one day above another, but to eſteem every day, no days having ever had any real holineſs in them one above another; but only a figurative, or repreſentative, which the ſubſtance, Chriſt and his goſpel, ſwallows up: for as his day dawns, thoſe things which were the ſhadow of it fly away.

The ſecond Letter anſwered.

Object. 1. IT is ſaid to be *dangerous ſo to hold forth the ſpiritual ſabbatiſm, as to deny the weekly ſabbath, wherein our Lord Jeſus Chriſt reſted, &c. and which he bleſſed and ſanctified to Adam and his poſterity, &c.*

Anſ. The goſpel is a ſtate of ſubſtance, of fulfilling the types and ſhadows of the law, by bringing believers into the poſſeſſion of that which they ſignified of. Canaan was a type of Chriſt, who is the land of the living, in whom every believer hath an habitation at preſent, according to the proportion of his faith: and the ſabbath is the day of reſt, which every believer is to celebrate to Chriſt in this holy land, which he doth by believing and obeying his Spirit in the faith, which keepeth him out of the ſin, the unbelief, the unreſt. But that the ſabbath of the law, the reſt thereof, which pointed to the faith, is ſtill to be held up in the times of the goſpel, I know no ſcripture which ſo teacheth, and I know ſomewhat which teacheth me otherwiſe. The day is dawned, bleſſed be the Lord God Almighty; the everlaſting day is dawned, and the ſhadows of the law are flown away.

Object. 2. It is ſaid, that Heb. iv. *ſpeaks of three reſts, the ſeventh day, or ſabbath reſt, Iſrael's reſt in Canaan,*

naan, and a remaining reſt, whereof David ſpeaks, Pſalm xcv.

Anſ. I grant it: there were two reſts under the law, which were ſigns of the one reſt under the goſpel. The two under the law were outward and natural, the one under the goſpel inward and ſpiritual, anſwerable to the ſtate of the goſpel. David was not only acquainted with the law ſtate, but with the free ſpirit, (Pſalm li.) and the eternal law thereof. He knew the new creation, the creating of a new ſpirit, (with its travel through the law) and alſo the new reſt. He knew the circumciſion of the heart, the ſpiritual ſacrifices of a broken heart and of praiſe; he could take the cup of ſalvation, and ſing the ſong of praiſe to the Lord, which none can do in the ſtrange land, nor on any other day but the day of reſt. And he incites Iſrael to this reſt, that they might not harden their hearts againſt it; but in the day of their viſitation enter into it, by hearkening to the word which was nigh them, which gives the entrance through the faith. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your "hearts," &c. There is a reſt ye are now called to enter into, as your fathers were called to enter into the land of Canaan: harden not your hearts as they did; but hear the voice, hear the word which calls to this reſt, believe and enter. This reſt remains, ſays the apoſtle; the others were types of it under the law ſtate, which was to paſs away.

Object. 3. It is ſaid, *ceremonial ſigns are done away, but the ten commands under the mercy-ſeat are of another nature: and that there are ſigns which are not yet aboliſhed, (as the rain-bow, ſun, moon, and ſtars) but ſtill remain for us to make good uſe of.*

Anſ. The mercy-ſeat under the law is done away, and the ſubſtance thereof is come; and will ye not give him leave to write his law in the tables which he ſhall chooſe, where his diſciples may read it with the eye which he gives? Is his law now to be read in the ſhadow, or with the outward eye, or to be looked for under the old mercy-ſeat of the outward tabernacle?

Or is it to be read with the eye of the new creature, with the eye of faith, with the eye of the Spirit, in the everlasting gospel, where the life itself is read, and in other books or writings without, but tidings or relations of the life? Here Christ, here the Spirit, here the eternal life, here the love, the joy, the peace, the rest, the purity, which is eternal, is seen, is felt, is handled, is enjoyed: for the true faith is indeed the substance of the things hoped for, giving victory over the enemies which disturb, and a quiet habitation in him who is the rest.

And as touching signs, I do not say that signs are so done away as that there is now no good use to be made of them; but in reading the law, and shadows thereof, the Lord may please, by his Spirit, to enlighten the spirit of him who reads in his fear to see through them: but this I do not find, that so much as any one sign or shadow under the law was to be continued in that way of service under the gospel; for indeed to what end should it? When that is come which it signified, is not its work at an end? And that that sabbath was given for a sign (as well as any other sabbaths of the law) I find expressly, Exod. xxxi. 13 to 18.

Object. 4. It is said, *That though Christ's law be a new law; yet it is also old, given of old to the Jews.*

Ans. Yea, it is older than so; for it was written in Abel's and the other holy mens hearts, long before this covenant of the law in writing was made with the Jews. And consider well which is now to stand in the times of the gospel, the writing of the law by the Spirit in the hearts of believers, as it was written by virtue of the promise before the law was given, or the outward and visible writing under the law, which was done for the sake of, and as a suitable dispensation for, that outward people. It was not thus from the beginning; but after a long time: for when God chose an outward people, he chose also this way of writing to signify somewhat by; which signification is concerning another state; in which state, that which was signi-

ſignified is to be ſet up and advanced, and not the ſhadows which were ſignificant of it.

It is further ſaid, *That the Lord writes theſe things new in his peoples hearts, to know the Lord, as their God, and as the God and Father of Jeſus Chriſt, and as their Father in him; and to love their brethren as Chriſt loved them. And he writes this law alſo in their hearts,* "Thou "ſhalt have no other gods but me; make no image, "exalt my name, keep holy the ſabbath," &c.

Anſ. If God write theſe things in the heart, are they not to be read there? If God write them in the new covenant, and in the new tables, ſhall not I read them there? And if I can read there in this living book what God writes in it by his Spirit, is not this nearer to me and clearer, and read by a more certain eye, than what I can read with my outward eye in tables of ſtone? Oh! do not turn the believer out of his way: do not hinder him from reading in the book, which is clear and infallible, the clear and infallible things of God. Will God write in my heart, and will he not give me an eye to read? Shall he give me an eye to read, and ſhall I not read therewith? Thou haſt here confeſſed this to be the new writing, and the new writing belongs to the new covenant; both which are proper to the goſpel ſtate, and to Chriſt's mediation, who is Mediator of the new covenant, Heb. viii. 6. "And in that he ſaith, a new, he hath "made the firſt old. Now that which decayeth and "waxeth old is ready to vaniſh away," ver. 13.

Object. 5. It is ſaid, *That love being the ſum and ſubſtance of the law of the Spirit, makes no more againſt the fourth commandment than againſt the reſt.*

Anſ. Love is the ſubſtance of them all, and they are all fulfilled in it; but they are not after this manner fulfilled; to wit, that a man ſhould ſtrive particularly to keep them in his eye, and ſo labour to fulfil them in love; but rather thus, in waiting on the Lord, to receive love from him, and to be kept by him in the love; in this love received they are all

fulfilled, and cannot be broken, and this is an eaſy yoke. This is the new birth, and the path thereof; the other is but the old creature, with its ſtriving after the path and inheritance of life. And as this love is the fulfilling of the law, ſo the heart is the tables of this love, wherein God writeth both the whole and all the parts of his law. Now I am not againſt any man, who in ſingleneſs of heart applies himſelf to the letter; yet it is but the old way, and a converſing with Chriſt after the manner of Moſes's diſpenſation; but I muſt confeſs that I am for the new covenant, and for the miniſtry of the Spirit, which is far beyond the letter; and though I have known Chriſt and the laws of his life after the fleſh; yet henceforth my deſire is not after knowing him ſo any more, but to know him in the eternal life of his Spirit, and to drink of the fruit of the vine, new with him in his Father's kingdom.

A BRIEF

A BRIEF EXPLICATION

Of the MYSTERY of the

SIX DAYS LABOUR,

AND

SEVENTH DAY's SABBATH,

For ſuch to behold, the Eye of whoſe Spirit is opened by the Pure Anointing; and who are not ſo drowned in their Conceivings and Reaſonings about the Senſe of the Letter, as moſt of the Profeſſors of this Age are,

MATT. xi. 28, 29, 30.

Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls; for my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light.

HE that hears the joyful ſound of the ever-living power, calling him by the voice of his eternal light out of the darkneſs, out of the death, out of the miſery, out of the dominions, territories, and deep ſlavery of Satan unto himſelf, and cometh unto him in the virtue and power of that life which calleth, he hath a taſte given him of the eternal reſt, and a promiſe of entering into it.

But the entrance into the fulneſs thereof is not preſently; but he hath a long journey to take from Egypt, the dark land; from Sodom, the filthy land; from Babylon, where all the veſſels and holy things of God have been defiled, through the wilderneſs unto Canaan; and many battles are to be fought with enemies by the way, and alſo with the enemies which poſſeſs the holy land; and many hardſhips to be undergone in following the Captain, who alſo leadeth his Iſrael by a pillar of cloud by day, and by a pillar of fire by night; and there muſt be a circumciſion and baptiſm in the cloud and in the ſea, and the falling of all thoſe carcaſſes in the wilderneſs, which are not to enter, nor ſo much as ſee, the good land, before the entrance be miniſtered to the ſeed, and to that which paſſeth through the water and through the fire with the ſeed. In plain terms, there muſt be a taking up of the yoke, and a learning of Chriſt under the yoke, till the proud, the ſtiff, the ſtubborn, the wiſe, the wilful, the ſelfiſh ſpirit, the hard ſtony heart, be waſted and worn out by the croſs, and nothing left but what becomes one with the ſeed, and ſo is fit to be married to it, and to enter with it into the everlaſting kingdom.

Now this bearing the yoke, this taking up of the croſs, this following of Chriſt in the wilderneſs, through the corrections of the Father, through the buffetings and temptations of the enemy, in the midſt of all the weakneſſes and frailties of the fleſh, going when he bids go, ſtanding ſtill where he ſtops, fighting when he prepares for the warfare, bearing the repulſe, when he ſuffers the enemy to prevail, and hoping, even beyond hope, for his relief and victory in due ſeaſon: here is the labour, here is the travail, here is the working under the life, with the meaſure of grace and power received from the life. So that, firſt, the day-ſpring from on high viſits; from that viſitation there is light entered into the heart; by cloſing with that light there is grace received; with this grace received there is work to be done for God; his talent is to be improved

proved all the ſix days, by all that will reſt with him on the ſeventh, and that deſire to ceaſe from their labours in the fruition of the faith, the life, the power; the power living, becoming, and performing all in them. And he that doth not improve the talent; he that doth not follow on in the pure light, but either ſits down by the way, or is deceived with an image of what once was true in him, he can never arrive at the land of reſt, (though perhaps he may arrive at that which he may call ſo) but when the eternal witneſs awakes in him, he will find the want of it, and bitterly bewail his grievous miſtake.

Now in this hard travail and grievous labour under the cloſe laws and ſpiritual commandments of the life, (hard I mean, yea, very hard, to the unrenewed part, though eaſy and natural to that part which is renewed and born of God) it pleaſeth the Lord now and then to give a day of refreſhment, cauſing his life ſo powerfully to ſpring up, that it even ſenſibly is and doth all in the heart. This is a ſabbath, wherein the ſoul reſts in the powerful movings and operations of the life, and doth not find any ſtreſs of trouble, or hardſhip, or labour upon it; but ſits ſtill in the power, is at eaſe in the life, in the eternal virtue, which lives, and moves, and is all in it; and no pain, no trouble, no grievouſneſs of any command is felt; but to it all is eaſy, all is natural, all is purely pleaſant; the life (to which all its own laws, ſtatutes, ordinances, judgments, ways, and paths are eaſy) performing all it calls for, even as faſt as it calls for it. And here not only a ſabbath of days, but alſo a ſabbath of weeks, yea, ſometimes a ſabbath of years (beſides the everlaſting jubilee or year of perfect redemption itſelf) are known and witneſſed by ſuch as have waited on the Lord in ſingleneſs of heart, under the yoke of his Spirit, for the bringing down of the rough and untoward nature, and for the raiſing up of the meek and lowly heart.

But here it is exceeding eaſy running out, and ſtarting aſide; it is eaſy running out from under the yoke,

to avoid the bitterneſs of the hardſhip to the earthly part; it is much eaſier running out on the day of reſt, and ſo loſing the truth in a joy and rejoicing, even ſuch a one as might have a true ground. Oh! who can but think the bitterneſs of death is paſt, when all enemies are vaniſhed, and there is nothing left but the Lord and the ſoul embracing each other! And who can but be unwilling to come back again to his labour, and to the reſidue of his hard travail afterwards? And yet it is far better to return to the work in the vineyard, and to ſuffer again with the ſeed, than to keep up the reſt in a notion, and ſo to loſe the life and pure preſence and virtue of the ſeed, when it returns unto, and calls back to the labour. Oh! how many have periſhed here! ſuffering a divorce from that which led them into the reſt, not being willing to go back again with it to fill up the reſidue of its ſufferings, which were yet behind, and ſo have kept up a falſe, dead, notional reſt, after the true ſabbath was ended.

Now there is no way for ſuch, but to wait to feel the living breath, the quickening virtue, the day-ſpring from on high, which by the brightneſs of its riſing can diſcover this falſe reſt, this dead reſt, this notional reſt, this eaſe in the earthly, in the fleſhly, in the underſtanding part, which they uphold by things they have formerly gathered from the ſcriptures, or from their own (perhaps once living) experiences; but now hold out of the feeling and poſſeſſion of the life in the dead part. But that it is thus with them they can never ſee, until the light from which they have erred ſpring up and diſcover it to them; and when the light doth ariſe and diſcover it, they will find the way of return, and the path of redemption, much more difficult to them than it was at firſt: yet it is better to part with the eaſe of the fleſh, and to undergo the pangs of a new birth, than to miſs of the inheritance in the good land.

There are three ſteps or degrees of the bleſſed eſtate: Firſt, there are *deſires*, thirſtings, and breathings,

begotten

begotten after the life. Secondly, there is *a labouring in the ſervice* (under the yoke) *by the virtue which ſprings from the life.* Thirdly, there is a *reſt*, or ſitting down at eaſe *in the life.* By the ſtirring of life in the ſoul, deſires after life are kindled. He in whom the deſires are kindled, and who feeleth the eternal virtue, cannot but be running the race; he whom the Spirit of the Lord findeth faithful in running the race, it pleaſeth the Lord ever and anon to be giving him a taſte of the reſt. Thus the ſpring ſtirring, the ſoul cannot but move towards its centre; and as it entereth into and fixeth in its centre, it partaketh of the reſt. Now to know the leadings of the Spirit forward and backward into theſe, into deſires, when he pleaſeth; into the labour and ſervice of the life, when he pleaſeth; into the ſweet reſt and perfect repoſe in the life, when he pleaſeth; here is the ſafety and ſweet progreſs of the renewed ſpirit. That man who is born of the Spirit, is to wait for the movings, breathings, and kindlings of the Spirit in him: and when the ſun ariſeth, he is to go forth to his labour in the light thereof, and in the night and withdrawing of the ſun to retire; and when his ſeventh day of reſt comes, he is to receive it from, and enjoy it in, the Spirit; and afterward to be willing to begin his week again, even till his whole race and the full courſe of his pilgrimage be finiſhed. Yet if it were poſſible for man, after he is come to Chriſt, to abide perfectly with him, to ceaſe from luſt, to keep within the faith, to draw naturally in the yoke, to bow in the Spirit continually to the Father of ſpirits, there would be a continual ſabbath kept in the paſſage, even before the great, full, and perfect ſabbath in the end. The hardneſs and uneaſineſs of the labour, is becauſe of a part contrary to the life, which, when it is worn out, there will be no more labour; but the yoke will become the reſt, and all the motions and operations of life will flow forth naturally in the reſt. And here is "the patience and "faith of the ſaints," to wait under the yoke, under the

the daily croſs to that part which is to be brought and kept under, till all the bonds of captivity be broke through by the life, and the veil of fleſh rent from the top to the bottom, (the remaining of which is that which ſtops the free current of life) and then ſhall the ſoul enter into the holy of holies, obtaining the full poſſeſſion of the everlaſting inheritance, and of the eternal redemption, and know ſorrow, tears, bonds, ſickneſs, death, captivity (no not ſo much as grappling with them, or travelling out of them) no more; but the enjoyment of the plenty and fulneſs of the life, reaping all the pleaſant fruits of life in the rich land of life for evermore.

SOME

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

PROPOUNDED TO THE

JEWS,

That they may Hear and Conſider, and their Hearts at length may be turned towards that which alone is able to Convert them to GOD; that they may once more become his People, and enter into an Everlaſting Covenant with him that may not be broken; that ſo they may abide in his Love and Covenant of LIFE, and remain his People for ever.

Conſideration 1. *WHAT great love, mercy, and kindneſs God ſhewed to that people, above all nations and peoples under heaven!* Of his own free love he ſet his heart upon them, chooſing them to be a people to himſelf. He brought them out of Egypt, by a mighty hand and outſtretched arm; he mightily preſerved them in, and led them through, the wilderneſs. He entered into a covenant with them to become their God, and betrothed them unto himſelf for his own lot and inheritance. He gave them righteous laws, judgments, ſtatutes, and ordinances,

ordinances, both of worſhip towards him, and of an upright demeanor and converſation among themſelves, and towards all men. He drove out the heathen from before them, and gave them a pleaſant land to poſſeſs, even *the glory of all lands*, a land flowing with milk and honey. He built an habitation for himſelf among them; firſt a moving ſanctuary or tabernacle, afterwards a more ſettled abiding place or temple, (which Solomon built) wherein was the ark of his preſence, where he was to be ſought unto and inquired of by them, and towards which their prayers were to be directed; and there was a mercy-ſeat, whereof they had large experience; and he ever and anon ſent prophets among them, to reprove their errors and backſlidings, and to ſet them to rights again. He raiſed up judges likewiſe to defend them; and although they were weary of his government, deſiring a king after the manner of the nations ſo vehemently, that they even forced a king from him, yet he took him away from them, and after him choſe "a man after his own "heart, to feed Jacob his people, and Iſrael his inhe-"ritance; who fed them according to the integrity of "his heart, and guided them by the ſkilfulneſs of his "hands." What ſhould I ſay more? What was wanting of love, of care, of goodneſs, of kindneſs, of mercy, of gentleneſs, of any thing that a people could deſire of their God? I ſay, what was wanting of all this on God's part? What could he have done more for his vineyard than he did do? Nay, he emptied upon them all the goodneſs, all the mercy, love, favour, &c. that that covenant would hold to the full; yea, and more too; for he bare with them more than that covenant required him to bear, and redeemed them oftener than that covenant engaged him; "yea, many "times turned he his anger away, and did not ſtir up "all his wrath," as he might often have done according to the tenor of that covenant. "Yea, in all their "afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his pre-"ſence ſaved them:" and he was ſtill ready to ſay in his

his heart, "Surely they are my people, children that "will not lie;" at length they will ſee their error, repent, and be true to me; inſomuch as he was never weary of ſaving them, of trying them again and again; of ſtirring up his bowels of love and pity to redeem them; of ſending his ſervants and prophets among them to warn and reclaim them, even till at laſt it was manifeſt that there was no remedy but he muſt caſt them off, and provoke them to jealouſy by a fooliſh nation, Deut. xxxii. 20, 21. drawing them nigh to him, who had been worſhipping ſtocks and ſtones; making them become a people, who had long been no people; and caſting theſe out of his ſight, making them become no people, who had ſo long been his choſen peculiar people, in covenant with him, and nigh unto him above all the families of the earth.

Conſideration 2. *What conſtant rebellion and ſtiffneſs of ſpirit that people all along expreſſed towards the Lord!* What wild ſour grapes they ſtill brought forth to him; ſour love, ſour obedience, ſour worſhip and ſacrifices, ſuch as the pure palate of the Lord could find no reliſh nor ſavour in: but as Moſes had told them, that it was not for their righteouſneſs God choſe them to give them the good land to poſſeſs, for they were a rebellious and ſtiff-necked people, Deut. ix. 6, 7. ſo it was not for their goodneſs that God continued his love to them, for they were all along provoking him, Jer. xliv. 4. When God came to ſhew that great mercy to them of redeeming them out of Egypt, and bid them caſt away their idols, they would not caſt away their idols, Ezek. xx. 7, 8. neither did they regard that mercy of redemption from the houſe of bondage, and from the iron furnace; but ſaid to Moſes, it was better for them to ſtay in Egypt, and to ſerve the Egyptians, Exod. xiv. 12. Again in the wilderneſs, how did they provoke him all thoſe forty years of mercy; how did they err in their hearts from his pure fear, and from love to him, and from faith and confidence in him! How did they murmur againſt him,

him, and againſt Moſes and Aaron their leaders! How did they forget his works and his wonders continually! When they came near the land, and ſhould have gone in to poſſeſs it, then they would not, but repined and rebelled, becauſe of the tallneſs and ſtrength of the enemy, and of their cities; and when they were forbid to go, then they would go and fight with them. What ſhould I mention the time of the judges and of the kings; how often the Lord made them ſmart by their enemies in their own land; how often he gave them up to captivity out of their land, even till at length that great captivity of Babylon befel them, and ſince that a greater captivity and deſolation than that of Babylon?

Conſideration 3. *Whether God, having tried this people even to the utmoſt, by that covenant which he made with them by Moſes in Mount Sinai, may ever pleaſe to try them ſo any more: or if there yet remain any mercy or love from God towards them, whether it is not to be expected another way, and upon another account?* This is very neceſſary and profitable for them to conſider, that they may not be looking that way for mercy and favour from God, in which it is never to come, and ſo have their eyes and hearts diverted from that way according to which it is to come; for this muſt needs put them back exceedingly, if their eyes be looking out one way, and the love of God hath choſen another channel to run towards them in. This may make them refuſe the very mercy, love, and redemption, when it comes, ſuſpecting it not to be it, becauſe it comes not in the way, and after the manner that they look for it. Now God hath expreſsly ſaid, that when he ſhall be pacified in them, and ſhall look again upon them with an eye of favour, to do them good, it ſhall not be by their covenant, (which could never laſt, but was ſtill broken on their parts) but by his own everlaſting covenant, which he would eſtabliſh to them, Ezek. xvi. 60, &c. It ſhould therefore diligently be inquired by them, *What covenant it is which is called thei-*

their covenant, ver. 61. *And what covenant it is which is called God's covenant*, ver. 62. that they may withdraw their eyes and hopes from the one, from whence their redemption, recovery, and mercy cannot come, towards the other, from whence it is to come? To which query, for their ſakes, it is in my heart to return this anſwer.

Anſ. Their covenant is that which they entered into with God, the covenant that their hearts choſe to unite with God by: and that was to this effect, *That if God would ſhew them his will, they would obey it.* "Go thou near (ſaid they to Moſes) and hear all that "the Lord our God ſhall ſay, and ſpeak thou unto us "all that the Lord our God ſhall ſpeak unto thee, and "we will hear it and do it," Deut. v. 27. Thus they thought, but the Lord knew otherwiſe: for "Oh!" ſaith the Lord, "that there were ſuch a heart in "them," &c. ver. 29. and Moſes knew otherwiſe, he knew that they would "corrupt themſelves, and that "evil would befal them in the latter days," Deut. xxxi. 29. But God's covenant was the free covenant he made with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, the covenant of his grace, the covenant of his free love, whereby he was able to reach them in Egypt, upon the cry of the ſeed in them, (in the midſt of their idolatries, and to bring them out and do them good, notwithſtanding their ſtubbornneſs and ſtiff-neckedneſs) even before the other covenant was made; this covenant of love was God's covenant. This is the covenant God remembered to them in the days of their youth, while they were young and tender, and not yet grown up to be a people under the other covenant; and this is the covenant which laſts for ever, which is not founded upon their obedience, but on God's free love to them for his own name ſake, and for their father's ſake with whom he freely made it.

Queſt. *What doth this covenant contain?*

Anſ. Putting his fear in the heart, writing his laws in the mind, pouring of pure clear water upon them

to

to wash away the pollutions of their inward parts, circumcising the filth of the heart, healing the backsliding nature by creating of a right spirit within, and keeping of the created spirit right by the presence of that Spirit which created it; see Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c. Hosea xiv. 4. This is God's covenant, this is the new covenant, which is to be made with the house of Israel and Judah when God redeems them; and they can never be redeemed but by this covenant, but are to remain desolate, until the Spirit be poured out from on high upon them, Isa. xxxii. 15. until their hearts be circumcised to love the Lord their God, until his fear be placed there, and they thereby caused to walk in his ways. As therefore they receive the Spirit, are brought into the fear, have the law written on their minds, and become subject thereto, so will they taste of this covenant, be brought into redemption by it, and become a glory inwardly, and outwardly also upon the earth.

Quest. *What is the way for them to have the fear of God put in their hearts, to have their hearts circumcised, to receive the Spirit and his laws into their minds, and so to come into this covenant?*

Ans. There is no other way but that to which Moses himself directed them, after God had made the other covenant with them, and tried them long by it, together with many temptations, signs, and wonders, both before and after it; and seeing that by all these they had not an heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, Moses at length directs them to another covenant, the word whereof would give them eyes to see, and ears to hear, and an heart to understand. Which covenant was a covenant besides the former, Deut. xxix. 1. and was indeed the covenant concerning life or death eternal, chap. xxx. 15. (the other being but a covenant of their outward state, made with them after their coming out of Egypt, upon their deliverance therefrom, and according to their choice to become a people to God according to it.) This word,

word, Moſes tells them, was near them (nearer than that which was ſpoken by God on the mount, and afterwards written on tables of ſtone). The voice of this word and the commandment thereof was nearer, that they need not ſeek any where abroad for it, but only liſten at home to hear its ſpeech, obey it in the faith, and live for ever, Deut. xxx. 11, &c. This is the way for them and all men to come into this covenant, and there is no other; there is a light ſhining in the darkneſs of man's heart, which ſprings up in him, and caſts forth its rays to diſcover and draw him out of the darkneſs: now as this light is felt, loved, underſtood in ſpirit, hearkened and cleaved to in the pure faith, which it begets; that which cleaves to it, is drawn out of the darkneſs by it, into the covenant of the pure eternal light, where God is, and whither all they are tranſlated, who are drawn to him in and by this covenant, as they are kept, preſerved, and continue in the faith, love, and obedience of it. Now I would yet put theſe few things more to them.

Firſt, Whether that people of the Jews, as they ſtood related to God in that covenant (given by Moſes at mount Horeb) with the covenant itſelf, and all things appertaining thereto, were not a ſhadow of ſome inward and ſpiritual thing afterwards to appear and be made manifeſt in its ſeaſon. Whether they themſelves were not a ſhadow of a more inward and ſpiritual people, to be gathered to God by the inward and ſpiritual covenant; and whether their outward covenant was not a ſhadow or viſible repreſentation of that covenant, and the laws of it a ſhadow or repreſentation of the inward laws, which were to be written in the hearts of that ſpiritual people? Was not their tabernacle, or temple, a ſhadow of the true tabernacle, or temple; ſeeing God dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but in a poor, humble, contrite ſpirit, and in the heart that trembles at his word? Iſa. lvii. 15. and chap. lxvi. 1, 2. So was not their circumciſion a ſhadow of the circumciſion which is to

paſs upon the hearts of God's choſen? Were not their ſacrifices types, or repreſentations, of the ſacrifices of praiſe and of a broken heart? Pſa. li. 17. and Pſa. l. 14. Was not their Canaan, or holy land, a type of the true holy ſpiritual reſt, which the faith gives entrance into? Their city Jeruſalem a type of the Jehovah-ſhamma? Their prieſts and Levites types of the ſpiritual prieſthood, which was to offer the pure offering and ſpiritual ſacrifices among the Gentiles? Malachi i. 11. Mark that place, if it did not plainly foretel the caſting off of the Jews, with the rejecting of their offerings, prieſts, and Levites, and God's raiſing up a ſeed among the Gentiles, where he would have a more acceptable people and worſhip, even a pure ſpiritual people, and a pure ſpiritual offering.

Secondly, If they were types, repreſentations, or ſhadows of ſomewhat ſpiritual to come, then were they not to give place to that which is ſpiritual when it came, and ſo to be ſwallowed up in it? Is not the ſpiritual glory the glory? The inward Jew, the Jew inward? The circumciſion of the heart, the choice circumciſion? The offering up of praiſe and of a broken heart, the acceptable ſacrifice? The land of life and righteouſneſs, the true land of reſt to the living by faith? Is not the ſpiritual city, houſe, or temple which God builds, the Jeruſalem or temple of the new covenant? Is not this the choice houſe to God? And is not this ſpiritual glory to be expected in the days of the Meſſiah, and all the types and ſhadows of Moſes, which pointed at him, to end in him, when once he comes to ſet up his true, inward, inviſible, ſubſtantial glory among his inward and ſpiritual people? When the day of Meſſiah dawns, ſhall not Moſes's ſhadows fly away? Oh! that your eyes were opened to behold the inward glory of life, the good things of the new covenant, the great treaſure and riches which are revealed and poſſeſſed in the Spirit by the ſpirits that are redeemed unto God, that ye might partake thereof; and then your eye would not be

be ſo much on that which is outward; which if ye had, even to the utmoſt of your deſire, is not comparable to the inward.

Laſtly, Search the prophets, ſee if the Meſſiah is not firſt to come in a deſpiſable way, as a man of ſorrows, Iſa. liii. 2, 3. whoſe viſage in that appearance was to be more marred than any man's, Iſa. lii. 14. And conſider whether he was not to be cut off, though not for himſelf, Dan. ix. 26. and then to ſit at the right hand of God, until his enemies be made his footſtool, Pſa. cx. 1. before he come in that glory wherein ye expect him. So that if he be not thus come already, then that coming of his is yet to be expected, and his hands and feet are yet to be pierced by you, and then afterwards ye may look upon him whom you have pierced, Zech. xii. 10. and all the families of Iſrael mourn bitterly apart for it, ver. 12.

When Moſes gave the law, the veil was over his face; your fathers were not able to bear the light wherein the law was given, nor the light wherein the prophecies of the prophets were given; and ſo they ſtill erred from the law, were offended at the prophets while they were alive, and miſunderſtood their words after their death. Now do not ye ſearch into Moſes and the prophets in the ſame ſpirit of error as your fathers did, being ſhut out from the light of them, even as they were? If it be thus, if the veil be over your hearts, if ye be ignorant of the true light, of the true eternal power wherein the ſcriptures were given forth, ye muſt needs miſunderſtand them, miſunderſtand Moſes, miſunderſtand the prophets, miſunderſtand the things ſpoken concerning the Meſſiah; and ſo not be able to ſee unto the end of thoſe things miniſtered by Moſes, and of that miniſtration which was to paſs away; nor into the beginning of the miniſtration of the Meſſiah, which was to ſucceed it. Oh! turn within to the word nigh in the heart! that the true Jew may be begotten and formed in you, and his light may ariſe and overſpread you; that in

that light ye may ſee the light of Moſes, and the light of the prophets, and not gather falſe meanings from their words, but underſtand them aright in the ſame holy Spirit, and enjoy the bleſſedneſs they ſpake of and directed to, which lies in the inward raiſing up of an inward ſeed, and not in an outward conformity of the outward man, while the heart and mind remains unchanged and unrenewed; which can never be made new by any miniſtry of the letter without the Spirit, but alone by the miniſtry of the Spirit, whether with or without the letter, as he pleaſeth.

I. P.

SOME

SOME

QUERIES

Concerning the WORK of GOD in the WORLD, which is to be expected in the latter Ages thereof; with a few plain Words to the Nation of ENGLAND, tending towards ſtopping the future Breakings-forth of God's Wrath, both upon the People and Powers thereof; with an ADVERTISEMENT relating to the preſent State of Things.

Query 1. WHETHER the kingdoms of the earth ſhall not one day become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt, wherein the Lord God Omnipotent ſhall reign, and man's glory and greatneſs fall, that God alone may be exalted in that day? Rev. xi. 15. 17. Iſa. ii. 11, 12. xvii. 22.

Query 2. When ſhall this be? Whether this is not to be expected upon the recovery out of the antichriſtian apoſtaſy? Whether the man-child is not then to be expected to be ſo born and brought forth, as to rule all nations with a rod of iron? Rev. xix. 6. and chap. xii. 5.

Query 3. When the Son of man comes to take the government to himſelf, to give forth the law out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem, Iſa. ii. 3. whether he ſhall find faith on the earth? Whe-

ther he ſhall find the kings and powers of the earth ready to receive him, and the profeſſors willing to ſubmit themſelves unto him? Or whether they ſhall generally combine againſt him, and he be fain to overcome them, before he can reign over them? Luke xviii. 8. Rev. xvii. 12, 13. 14. Pſa. ii. 2, 3.

Query 4. Why theſe things may not be expected in this our day, and be already begun in this our nation, ſeeing ſo many ſtrange things have happened among us, as have not in many foregoing ages; God having ſo ſtrangely raiſed up a generation to do ſervice for him, and ſo ſtrangely again brought them down, when they had ſo long and ſo often ſhewed themſelves unworthy of, and unfit for, ſo great a ſervice, by ſtill ſeeking themſelves, and forgetting the Lord that raiſed them?

Query 5. How the kingdoms of the earth are to become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt? Whether it be not by taking his yoke upon them, by ſubmitting to his laws, his cords, and bands? By giving up whatſoever is unjuſt, unrighteous, harſh, and oppreſſive; and coming under the bands of righteouſneſs, meekneſs, and equity? Pſa. ii. 10, 11. Mat. xi. 29.

Query 6. Whether the Lord be ariſen to ſhake terribly or no (as was long ago propheſied he ſhould Iſa. ii. 19.)? For the Lord will once more ſhake both heaven and earth, Heb. xii. 26. There hath been a ſore ſhaking in this nation: the foundations of government, yea, the very foundations of religion have been ſhaken, that that which cannot ſtand might be removed out of the way, and give place to that which cannot be ſhaken, ver. 27. Conſider therefore whether theſe be the beginnings of the great and terrible day of the Lord God Almighty, or only ſome ſuch ordinary ſhakings as uſe to happen according to the courſe of kingdoms and ſtates, which are ſubject to changes, alterations, and diſſettlements?

Query 7. When God beginneth to ſhake the heaven and earth in nations, (according to that great ſhaking, which

which is to be after the antichriſtian apoſtaſy, Rev. iv. and chap. vi.) whether there ever can be any firm ſettlement again upon the old foundations? There may appear ſome hopes and probability of a ſettlement again, which man may be tempted to faſten upon; but this will but provoke God to ſhake more effectually: for when God once ariſeth to ſhake, he will not give over till he hath made that fall, which he began to ſhake, Rev. xi. 13. *O England take heed!*

Query 8. How the kings, powers, and nations of the earth may ſecure their ſtanding in that day? Whether there be any way for them ſo to do, and what is that way? Whether there be any other way but kiſſing the Son, ſubmitting to his bands, being willing to be bound with the chains of righteouſneſs, love, and meekneſs, from all unrighteouſneſs and oppreſſion, both relating to their fellow-creatures and to his people? Pſa. ii. 12. and cxlix. 8.

Come, O nation of *England*, be bound! O powers of this nation, take the Lord's yoke upon you; ſeek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs, ſeek the good of all; not in words and pretences, but in truth and uprightneſs. Seek out that which is of God in every one of your hearts, and let that govern for God. Do not ſmite any for obedience to the living God, but come ye alſo under his yoke, that what is not of God in yourſelves, but an enemy to your ſouls, may be yoked down; and let all laws be formed, directed, and managed, to reach the unrighteous, that the rod of the wicked may not always lie upon the lot of the righteous, Pſa. cxxv. 3. nor oppreſſion and ſelf-will ſit in the ſeat of judgment, and paſs (becauſe of its power and authority) for righteouſneſs, Eccleſ. iii. 16. and iv. 1. O ye powers of England! ſave yourſelves and this nation from the terrible ſtroke of God, which is very near. And let not this following advice be diſdained by you, but conſider ſeriouſly of it.

Take heed how you call any to account for what they have done againſt you. There was an extraordinary

hand of God in these things; and in falling foul upon instruments, ye may clash against him before ye are aware. For their iniquity the Lord hath laid them aside, and raised you up again, giving you another day of trial; let that suffice, and look now to your own standing, that ye also do not fall by following their example of iniquity and unrighteousness. But if you will call them to account for any thing, let it be for being unfaithful to God and the people of this nation, to whom they made large promises, but performed little. And that which God required of them (and the nation had reason to expect from them) do ye now perform. Give all men the liberty of their consciences towards God; let them follow him out of the fashions, customs, and worships of the world without interruption; and let there also be a narrow search after what is unjust, unrighteous, and oppressive in any kind; and as fast as it is discovered let it be removed, that the nation may grow out of vanity, out of unrighteousness, into solidity and righteousness; and that the fear of offending man may not affright any from fearing, obeying, and worshipping of God in Spirit and truth, as he requireth; and then God will bless this nation, and the powers of it. For the Lord God taketh not pleasure in overturning of nations, or breaking in pieces the powers thereof: yet if they will by no means hearken, but harden their hearts, and stand in the way of his counsel and design, he cannot spare them, Isa. xxvii. 4. Therefore stand not in battle against him, but bow before him, O ye great ones of the earth! become low and little, that his wrath may pass by you; let go your own strength and greatness, and take hold of his strength, that ye may make peace with him, ver. 5. and do not go about to limit the Spirit of God in his people; that will most certainly ruin you! The Lord God hath begun to bestow his Spirit upon his sons and daughters, as in days of old, even as before the great apostasy and erring from it; and he requireth their obedience

dience to it; and who may safely forbid or punish them therefore? Much lies upon this land in this respect; Oh! do not add more, lest ye sink the nation and yourselves! Now a little to help the nation and powers thereof the better to digest the work of God, that they may not run on headily against him to their own ruin and destruction, let these two things following be considered.

1. *Whether the people of God, in the days of the apostles, were not a separated people; a people gathered out of nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, (gathered out of the Jewish worship, gathered out of the Heathenish worship) and separated to God?*

2. *Whether, after the antichristian apostasy, there are not a people to be gathered again, and separated again, from all antichristian ways of worship, even after the manner as they were before the apostasy from the Heathenish and Jewish worship? And so the same gospel which gathered at first, is after the apostasy to be preached to gather men again, Rev.* xiv. 6, 7.

Consider well of these things, that ye may not set yourselves against the Lord, to cross him in his work in this nation. Ye cannot hinder him from gathering his people now out of the apostatized state, no more than the Jews or Heathens could hinder him from gathering his elect then out of their corrupt states. The reformation out of popery was very weak and imperfect; the Lord waited long for the perfecting of it; but instead thereof, there was rather a running backwards towards it again. The Lord hath now at length begun the work himself, letting forth his Spirit upon his people, and gathering many into it, and is preparing the stones of his temple for his building, and he will assuredly build up his church again; ye cannot possibly stop him herein: ye may break yourselves by attempting to remove this burdensome stone out of your way (for indeed it doth lie somewhat offensively in the way of all settlements and governments according to the fleshly wisdom); but it will fall upon and break

break all that burden themſelves with it, though not by outward might or power, yet by that Spirit of life and righteouſneſs which is in it, which the Lord is with to proſper. Conſider theſe things in meekneſs, righteouſneſs, and in the fear of the Lord; even in that Spirit which is fit to act for God, and not againſt him.

An Advertiſement to the Powers and People of this Nation.

BECAUSE of my dear love to my native country, and becauſe of the dregs of that cup which the Lord hath already cauſed it to drink of, which cannot be ſpared unleſs the Lord's will be effected without it; which dregs are ſo bitter, terrible, and dreadful, as will make the ſtouteſt hearts to faint, and the moſt confident countenance wax pale: I ſay, for this cauſe, in love am I conſtrained to add theſe few lines more, that if it be poſſible this nation may apply itſelf, in the fear and dread of the eternal majeſty and power, to make its peace with him againſt whom it hath long warred, (not only by much outward wickedneſs, looſeneſs, vanity, and profaneneſs, but more eſpecially by ſetting up an invented form of godlineſs, and perſecuting the power) and to whom it is not yet reconciled in this matter, nor found ſo much as willing to be reconciled.

The Lord God of heaven and earth, of glory, of majeſty, of everlaſting power, victory, and dominion over all, who made both heaven and earth, and hath the command of all things therein, he diſpoſeth of nations, of governments, of earthly powers according to his pleaſure, and who may ſay unto him, what doſt thou? Who may implead him for making a rich nation poor, a ſtrong nation weak, or for bringing down the high and mighty, the ſtrong, ſtout, honourable, and

and noble in a nation, and exalting the poor, the mean, the perſecuted? And if he turn his hand again, and lay them flat whom he had lifted up, and exalt the other even unlooked-for, who can withſtand him, or who can contradict him?

Now what is in the Lord's heart (who is thus mighty and abſolute) he will certainly bring to paſs, how unlikely, how contrary, how impoſſible ſoever it ſeem to the eye of man. If he will exalt his deſpiſed truth, (which always was ſo to the eye of the great and wiſe-ones of this world) or give his people liberty to fear, worſhip, and obey him; if he will have truth and righteouſneſs have the dominion in mens hearts, and in the nations, and not in the wills and luſts of men, how great and powerful ſoever; I ſay, if this be his intent, though generation ſhould riſe up after generation to oppoſe him herein, yet will he be too hard for them all, and they will all fall before him; and his truth, his people, his holy eternal counſel will he raiſe up, and cauſe to triumph over them all.

It is man's way to ſettle himſelf by outward ſtrength againſt outward ſtrength, and then he thinks he is ſafe; not eying the inviſible hand which turns the wheels, and delights to overturn that which is outwardly ſtrong (and ſeemeth unremovable) when it forgetteth him, and oppoſeth itſelf againſt him. The Lord God loves to take his enemies at the ſtrongeſt, when they are moſt wiſe, moſt mighty, even when nothing ſeems able to deal with them but himſelf. This was it overthrew the foregoing powers one after another; they were courting worldly intereſt, and ſtrengthening themſelves that way; but overlooking God who raiſed them, and the work which he had raiſed them to accompliſh. This turned the hand againſt them which had been for them, and how then could they maintain their ſtanding?

Oh! that the preſent generation could ſee the tickliſhneſs of their ſtanding, and conſider that this is their day of trial, and that the Lord's eye is upon them,

to

to obſerve their ways, to ſee whether they will now mind righteouſneſs, and the liberty of his people better than formerly they did; and that his truth may in its life and power (and not in ſuch a form or way of worſhip as they may think good to preſcribe) have its ſcope in the nation. The Lord's eye and heart is upon his truth, and upon his people; and as nations or powers deal with that, ſo will he deal with them. Oh! therefore be not deceived; for though the Lord hath often-times long ſuffered his people to lie under reproach and perſecution, (as he did Iſrael in Egypt for divers ages) yet at length he hath ſtill heard their groans, and hath ariſen to deliver them: and though Pharoah afterwards with all his ſtrength went after them, and made no queſtion but to bring them back again under his ſubjection, (and there was nothing in appearance able to deliver them from him) yet he could not, but overthrew himſelf and his ſtrength utterly. Ye know not what ſtrong cries and tears were put up to the Lord before theſe late changes, that righteouſneſs might be eſtabliſhed in the nation, and that his people might have liberty to worſhip him in his fear, and according to the leadings of his Spirit, without being yoked under any form of worſhip which their hearts could not own to be of God. And when the Long Parliament was unexpectedly raiſed up, that was looked upon by many to have been the means God would have uſed towards the effecting of this: and we cannot deny but that God did make uſe of them in ſome things for good, for which his name was honoured. But though that inſtrument did warp, becoming unfaithful to the Lord, diverting from his work and ſervice, towards the ſeeking and eſtabliſhing of themſelves and their own intereſts, and ſo are at length themſelves juſtly therefore fallen; yet the work of the Lord is not fallen, as relating to himſelf; though, becauſe of the unfaithfulneſs and ſelf-ſeeking of the inſtruments which he began to uſe, at preſent it lieth under much reproach (and that juſtly as relating

to

to them); yet, for all this, the Lord himself can bring it about again, and carry it on with better advantage to his name, truth, and people, than if it had gone on in their hand: and the more men set themselves to oppose it, the more glory will God get to himself in effecting it.

Let not therefore my true love to the nation, and to the present powers thereof, be despised by them; but let them fear before the mighty God of heaven and earth, and in their hearts bow to him, that they may be humbled, and made fit instruments in his hand for his service, and not be found enemies against him. If they will be fit instruments for God to work by, they must be meek, lowly, poor in spirit, waiting in God's fear for his counsel, and not hearken to the fleshly wisdom of man, which is his utter enemy, and will persuade, advise, and instruct them to settle the nation and church (as they call it) in a way contrary to him. And remember this word: *Be sure you smite none for obedience to God. Limit not his Holy Spirit in his people; but limit the unclean and evil spirit in those who manifest themselves not to be his people.* This is the true intent of government. How can he who governs aright under God, hurt that which is of God, and for God? Or how can he spare that which his sword is given him to cut down? Oh! how happy were it for the nation, if they would let truth have its scope, and let righteousness overcome them! And not contend for shadows against the substance; but let the substance overcome all those shadows which have held it in bondage, and upheld its enemy.

The great enemy of God, all this night of the apostasy, hath been antichrist; who hath not been an open enemy only, but hath appeared as if he had been for Christ, commanding the worshipping and honouring of Christ, yea, and with a great zeal taking upon him to cause people to worship according to what he determined to be right: and thus he getteth into the temple, erecting an usurping authority over the conscience,

conſcience, ſetting up and compelling to an invented worſhip.

Againſt this kind of worſhip God hath ſtill been raiſing witneſſes: but he having the powers of the earth on his ſide, (as was propheſied he ſhould, Rev. xvii. 13.) hath often prevailed over them, Rev. xiii. 7. And ſo the truth hath been ſuppreſſed, and falſe worſhips ſet up by the powers of the earth, according to the proportion they have drank of the golden cup of fornication; which doth not only deceive in one way of manifeſt and groſs falſe worſhip, but hath many mixtures and myſteries of deceit in it, Rev. xvii. 2, &c.

Now God hath a time to call for an account of the ſufferings and blood of his ſaints, Rev. vi. 10, 11. He hath a time to judge the great whore, Rev. xvii. 1. And when the time of God's judgment comes upon the earth, God begins with his own houſe firſt, and ſo with that which hath taken upon it to ſeparate from Babylon, to ſee what he can find of Babylon therein; and he will judge that before he fall upon the great body of the myſtery of iniquity, 1 Pet. iv. 17. Heb. x. 30.

Now therefore it behoves this nation to conſider what of Babylon may be found in it, and to part with it, that it may eſcape the plagues of Babylon, Rev. xviii. 4. which are very bitter, as ver. 7, 8, &c. Theſe are the two main things whereof Babylon is guilty.

1. *An invented form of worſhip, a likeneſs of the true worſhip; but not the true worſhip itſelf.*

2. *A perſecuting and endeavouring to ſuppreſs the power of the truth, even of the purity of the godly religion and worſhip, by means of this form; becauſe, for conſcience ſake, men, who are taught otherwiſe by the Spirit of God, cannot ſubmit and ſubject thereto.*

This God is coming down to plead with in that great city Babylon; and this God will firſt plead with in thee, O England! Conſider what of this is

yet

yet remaining in thee, (or what of this thy heart hankers after) and part with it as thou loveſt thy peace. The Lord is the witneſs of the integrity and fidelity of my heart to thee in theſe lines. It will be hard for thee to eſcape the Lord's hand; yet it is not impoſſible. If thou bow before the mighty God, and lie abaſed in ſpirit at his feet, he can open that eye in thee which can let thee ſee thy danger, and alſo the way how to eſcape it.

I. P.

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THE

THE CONSIDERATION OF A POSITION CONCERNING THE BOOK OF COMMON-PRAYER.

AS ALSO

Of ſome PARTICULARS held forth for TRUTHS, by one EDMUND ELLIS, ſtiled a Miniſter of the Goſpel of JESUS CHRIST.

WITH

A WARNING of tender Bowels to the RULERS, TEACHERS, and PEOPLE of this NATION, concerning their CHURCH and MINISTRY.

LIKEWISE

A few WORDS concerning the KINGDOM, LAWS, and GOVERNMENT of CHRIST in the HEART and CONSCIENCE; its Inoffenſiveneſs to all juſt Laws and Governments of the Kingdoms of Men.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

Behold, I come as a Thief. Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his Shame. Rev. xvi. 15.

THE

PREFACE.

CHRIST, the eternal Son of God, the ſubſtance of all the types and ſhadows of the law, was made a prieſt to God, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life. He came in the power of the Father; he received the power, he miniſtered the power, and in the power. Thus he gathered together living ſtones, built them into a living temple for the Father of life to dwell in, that they may be filled with the power, dwell in the power, and be to the glory of the power. The church of Iſrael, the church of the Old Teſtament, the church of Moſes, was gathered by the letter, was to be ordered by the letter, was to keep and obſerve the law of the letter, was to have prieſts and ſacrifices according to the letter; but the New Teſtament church was to be of true Jews, of Jews gathered in the power, circumciſed by the power, renewed in the power, &c. So that he is not a Jew any longer, who is one outward, nor that circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumciſion is that of the heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter. We are the circumciſion, ſaith the apoſtle, which worſhip God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the fleſh. The New Teſtament ſtate is a ſtate of ſubſtance, even of that ſpiritual ſubſtance which the law held out in ſhadows. The Jew is in-

ward, the circumcision inward, the sacrifices inward, the church inward, the ministry inward, the worship inward: all is in Spirit, in life, in power, in virtue; the whole state is answerable to the High-priest of our profession, even after the power of the endless life. By the eternal Spirit was he made a minister, by it he preached, ("the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel," &c. Luke iv. 18.) "through it he offered up himself a "sacrifice without spot to God," Heb. ix. 14. And in the same power runs the vein of the whole dispensation of the gospel; for it is a ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8. Take away the life, take away the Spirit; ye take away the stones of this building; ye take away the church; ye take away the ministry; ye take away all.

Now about this inward building there was an outward court, which had its being, state and honour from the presence of the inward life. The virtue of the inward building did cast a reflection, and bring forth an outward state (as it cannot but do, wherever it appears in its riches and glory). This state stood firm in the days of the apostles, till God's measuring and removing of his temple, altar, and worshippers, and his giving up of the outward court (it having lost the life and virtue, which flowed into it from the temple, while the temple remained within it) to the Gentiles; who under the gospel are such as are uncircumcised in spirit, and can worship in the outward court without the Spirit. The enemy indeed fought hard against the life and power, but he could not there prevail; the gates of hell could not prevail against the true church, which brought forth the man-child, nor against the man-child whom she brought forth; but the man-child was caught up to God, and the woman fled into the wilderness. Then that church-state, and worship, which depended upon their presence, was dissolved: for how could it be otherwise, when both the man-child, which was the head of the church,

church, (from whence the virtue, life, and influence did flow into the whole body) and the woman (or church) herſelf alſo were both gone out of ſight? So that the miniſtry of eternal life, and the temple, wherein the life was miniſtered, being both removed, they are neither of them henceforward to be found in that place, where they were beheld before, (and where moſt eyes would be ready to look for them again) but there where the Spirit had hid them.

Now mark diligently, what kind of eſteem the true church hath had in the world, ever ſince her diſrobing herſelf of her outward garments, and flight into the wilderneſs, and how her true ſeed have been handled. The dragon immediately caſts a flood after her; her beautiful raiment being put off, and ſhe clothed in the habit of a widow, the eye of the world could no longer ſee and acknowledge her to be the church, but diſdain, reproach, revile her. This is her lot all the days of antichriſt; ſhe is miſrepreſented by the dragon's flood of reproaches, and looked upon as a ſtrumpet, as one that pretends to Chriſt for her Lord and huſband, to his Spirit, to his kingdom, to his truth, without a juſt right: and the remnant of her ſeed are ſtill made war with by the dragon. Who have been the hunted ones, the hated, the perſecuted in all nations, but the tender-conſcienced, who receive the law of Chriſt into their hearts, bowing to him in their worſhip and converſation, and dare not bow or worſhip according to the doctrines and commandments of men?

Now the true church or temple being thus removed, the outward court becomes the habitation and place of worſhip among the Gentiles, all the time of the church's abode in the wilderneſs. The Spirit of the Lord having left it, the heatheniſh ſpirit, (man's earthly nature and wiſdom) the ſpirit of antichriſt enters into it, and upholds the form of the former building, (ſo far as it judgeth neceſſary) and here it is found worſhipping, and making a great ſhew of holineſs and devotion, but in the mean time makes war

with the true worſhippers, who cannot worſhip in the outward court, (ſince the Spirit of the Lord hath left it, and given it to the Gentiles) but follow the church into the wilderneſs, and worſhip in that temple which God hath removed thither.

Oh! where is the eye which can read theſe things, as they are written either in the letter, or in the Spirit. Antichriſt is a myſtery of iniquity, which works, and gets up, and reigns, under an appearance of godlineſs; and he that will diſcern him, and his falſe ways of worſhip, muſt have that eye which ſees beyond the appearance of things, into their nature: and in this is the diſcovery of him, and the redemption from him. And happy is he, who is not "defiled with women," but abideth in the true *virginity*, expecting and preparing for the appearance of the bridegroom.

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THE CONSIDERATION OF A POSITION CONCERNING THE BOOK OF COMMON-PRAYER.

AS ALSO

Of ſome PARTICULARS held forth for TRUTHS, &c.

THERE is a poſition laid down in ſome printed letters, concerning the uſe of the Common Prayer-book, tendered by one Edm. Ellis (who profeſſeth himſelf to be a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt) to Mr. Hughes, and Mr. Ford (as he ſtileth them); againſt which poſition he intreateth me, if I find upon my ſpirit any thing to be objected againſt it, to diſcover it in exact and punctual expreſſions. This deſire of his is ſet down in print after the letters.

His poſition or aſſertion is this: *That a man may worſhip God in Spirit, and in truth, in the uſe of that form of prayer for morning and evening, which we call the Common-Prayer.*

Now whoever would weigh this aſſertion aright, muſt have the balance of the ſanctuary, and muſt put

it into the ſcale with an equal hand; and then looking with that eye, which is given to ſee the myſteries of the kingdom of God, to him who is born of God, the truth or error of it is eaſily diſcerned.

True prayer is the breathing of the child to the Father which begat it, from the ſenſe of its wants, for the ſupply of thoſe wants.

"The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou "heareſt the ſound thereof; but canſt not tell whence "it cometh, and whither it goeth; ſo is every one "that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8. God, by the breath of his Spirit, begets a man out of the ſpirit and likeneſs of this world into his own image and likeneſs. He that is thus begotten, wants nouriſhment, wants the divine warmth, the breaſts of conſolation, the clothing of the Spirit, the garment of ſalvation; wants the bread of life to feed on; wants the water of life to drink; wants ſtrength againſt the enemy's aſſaults, wiſdom againſt his ſnares and temptations; wants the arm of the Deliverer to preſerve and carry on the work of redemption daily; wants faith to deny the fleſhly wiſdom, that ſo he may truſt and feel the virtue of the arm of the Deliverer; wants hope, patience, meekneſs, a clear guidance, an upright heart to follow after the Lord; yea, very many are the daily wants of that which is begotten by the breath of God, in its ſtate of weakneſs, until it be drawn up into the unity of the body, where the full communion with the life is felt, the heart ſatisfied, and the wants drowned.

Now the breathing of this child to the Father from the ſenſe of theſe wants for his ſupply; that is prayer; nay, though it be but a groan, or ſigh, which cannot be uttered, or expreſſed; yet that is prayer, true prayer, which hath an acceptance with the Lord, and receiveth a gracious anſwer from him. And he that begetteth the child, teacheth him to pray, even by the ſame Spirit which begat him. In watching daily to the Spirit, the child is kept ſenſible of the will of the Father, and in his light he ſees the way wherein he

he is to walk; he ſees alſo the enemy when he is coming, yea, and the ſnares he is privily laying, and he feels his own weakneſs to withſtand or eſcape: and in this ſenſe his heart cries to the Father of ſpirits for preſervation; for him to ſtand by him; for him to ſtep in in the needful time, even in the ſeaſon of diſtreſs. And thus watching to the Spirit, the life of a Chriſtian is a continual courſe of prayer: *he prays continually.* This is the living prayer of the living child, which conſiſts not in a form of words, either read out of a book, or conceived in the mind; but in feeling the breath of its nature iſſuing out from the principle of life in it to the living ſpring, which is the Father of it; who, by cauſing his virtues to ſpring up in it, nouriſheth it to everlaſting life.

But now, man who is not born of the Spirit, but (by conceiving ſome of the truths of God in the wiſdom from below) hath attained to ſome change of opinion and converſation, he pretends to be this birth from above, though indeed he is born but "of bloods," or "of the will of the fleſh," or "of the will of "man," John i. 13. and what God begets in, and gives to, his true child, he will be imitating, though he be out of the nature and ſpirit where the true child is begotten, and where the true gift of the Father is received by him. He will be believing, though he hath not received any proportion of the living faith from the hand of the Father: he will be forming repentance and ſorrow for ſin, though his heart be not turned from it; he will be hoping in God's mercy, although he be both from off the foundation, and from under the ſhadow of the mercy-ſeat; and he will be praying, though he hath neither received the Spirit, nor been taught by the Spirit to pray; and ſo being from that which ſhould guide him, and teach him the truth and way of worſhip as it is in Jeſus, he runs out into the inventions and imaginations, and ſets up a way of his own chuſing; which he having much conſidered of, and beat out by reaſonings, and fenced about with arguments, he grows wiſe in his own eyes, and

and now verily believes it to be the way of God, and that he is able to maintain it againſt all oppoſers. Thus one man, he is for a form; another man, he is againſt a form, and for conceived prayers; and each think themſelves able to maintain their own, and to overthrow each other. But oh! that that ear were open which can hear the truth! that where there is any true, honeſt, upright deſire after God, from the ſimplicity of the heart, it might not be thus betrayed through the ſubtilty of the fleſhly wiſdom, which lies lurking in the wiſe, reaſoning, knowing part, to betray the poor weak babe. The natural man, the reaſoning man, the underſtanding man, the wiſe man according to the natural wiſdom, cannot underſtand the things of God. Here is no learning to pray aright, to believe aright, to hope aright, to mourn aright, to rejoice aright, &c. but this wiſdom muſt be brought to nothing, 1 Cor. i. 19. and a man muſt become a child to all knowledge, as let in this way; and he that ſo becomes a child, is taught to pray to believe, to wait, to hope, and all that is neceſſary to eternal life.

Now as the Father teacheth to pray, ſo he giveth deſires or words (if he pleaſe) according to the preſent need. Sometimes he gives but ability to ſigh or groan (if he give no more, he accepts that). Sometimes he gives ſtrong breathings and plenty of words to pour out the ſoul in before the Lord. But if a man ſhould catch thoſe words, and lay them up againſt another time, and offer them up to God in his own will, this would be but will-worſhip and abomination. This I have known experimentally, and have felt the wrath of God for it. That is prayer, which comes freſh from the Spirit; and that is a true deſire, which the Spirit begets; but the affections and ſparks of man's kindling pleaſe not the Lord, nor do they conduce to the ſoul's reſt, but will end in the bed of ſorrow, Iſa. l. 11.

Now as touching the Book of Common Prayer, or prayers conceived without the immediate breathings

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of the Spirit, I ſhall ſpeak mine own experience faithfully, which is this; I have felt both theſe ways draw out the wrong part, and keep that alive in me, which the true prayer kills. And he that utters a word beyond the ſenſe which God begets in his ſpirit, takes God's name in vain, and provokes him to jealouſy againſt his own ſoul. "God is in heaven, thou art on "earth, therefore let thy words be few." The few words which the Spirit ſpeaks, or the few ſtill, ſoft, gentle breathings which the Spirit begets, are pleaſing to God, and profitable to the ſoul; but the many words which man's wiſdom affects, hurt the precious life, and thicken the veil of death over the ſoul, keeping that part alive which ſeparates from God; which part muſt die ere the ſoul can live.

The true prayer is by that which God begets in the virtue of his Spirit, ("praying always in the Spirit," Epheſ. vi. 18. Jude 20.) in the time he chooſes: for the Spirit breatheth as well when he liſteth, as where he liſteth; and man cannot limit him when he ſhall breathe, or when he ſhall not breathe; but is to wait the ſeaſon of his breathing, and ſo to "watch unto "prayer."

Now if the prayer be in words, (for there is a praying without words) then it muſt be in thoſe words which he pleaſeth to give, from the ſenſe which he kindleth, and not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, or would chooſe to uſe. And indeed, in the true religion, and in every exerciſe of it, man's wiſdom is kept out, and nailed to the croſs, by which means the immortal life is raiſed, and grows in the true diſciple. He believes, he hopes, he waits, he prays, he mourns, he rejoices, he obeys, &c. in the croſs to the mortal part; not as man's wiſdom teacheth, or would teach, or can teach any of theſe things; for his ſacrifice is ſtill an abomination, even to the wiſe Egyptian part in himſelf; (O wiſe man! abaſe thyſelf before the Lord in his Spirit, that thou mayeſt read this and live!) but as the life teacheth, as the wiſdom from above teacheth, which breaketh down, ſhut-

ſhutteth up, confoundeth and deſtroyeth man's wiſdom, while he is teaching his babe.

Thus have I anſwered, in the ſimplicity of my heart, to the nature of the thing, ſo far as the Lord hath pleaſed to draw forth my ſpirit; and in ſinking down to that, which thus opened my ſpirit, my anſwer may eaſily be read and aſſented to: but to that which is in the diſputing wiſdom, out of the feeling of the hidden life and virtue, it may prove a myſtery.

Afterwards he alſo intreateth me to peruſe ſeriouſly, and to lay deeply to heart (in the real fear and dread of the great God) ſome particulars which he teacheth for truths.

I perceive he is offended at the queſtioning of his miniſtry, and that the main intent of his propoſing theſe is to juſtify his miniſtry; which, if they were true, yet the preaching of them would not prove him, or any man elſe, to be a miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt: for it is not preaching things that are true which makes a true miniſter; but the receiving of his miniſtry from the Lord. The goſpel is the Lord's, which is to be preached, and is to be preached in his power; and the miniſters which preach it are to be endued with his power, and to be ſent by him. The apoſtles themſelves, though they had received inſtructions concerning the kingdom from Chriſt's own lips, both in his life-time, and after his reſurrection, Acts i. 3. and had received a commiſſion from him to teach all nations, Mat. xxviii. 18, 19. yet this was not ſufficient to make them able miniſters of the New Teſtament; but, before they went abroad to preach, they were to wait for the power, Acts i. 4. 8.; and when they had received it, they were to miniſter in it, that men might be converted to the power, and by the power, that the faith of perſons might not ſtand in the wiſdom of their words, (which Paul might have abounded in, as well as others) but in the power of God, 1 Cor. ii. 5. And this was it made Paul miniſter in fear and trembling, leſt the wrong part in him ſhould miniſter; leſt the earthly underſtanding part ſhould be holding forth the truths

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of God out of the life, out of the power, and ſo he ſhould convert men to the wiſdom of the words he ſpake, and not to the power, ver. 2, 3. This was it he was ſent for, to turn men "from darkneſs to light, "and from the power of Satan to God," Acts xxvi. 18.; from the ſpirit of enmity and death, to the Spirit of love and life: and this he was careful of in his miniſtry, that men might not run away with his words, and miſs of the thing. And this alſo was the way whereby he diſcovered true and falſe miniſters: "I "will come, and know (ſaith he) not the ſpeech of "them which are puffed up, but the power: for the "kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. Many men might catch their words, and run away with them, and preach them; but they could not miniſter in the power. Now the kingdom which the goſpel miniſters are the preachers of, conſiſts not in words, but in power. "God hath "made us able miniſters of the New Teſtament, not "of the letter, but of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6. The miniſtry of the New Teſtament is a miniſtry of the Spirit, and it cannot be without the Spirit. It is a reaching to men's conſciences "in the demonſtration "of the Spirit and power," 1 Cor. ii. 4. and 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2. which being felt in the heart, and turned to, this converts them to God.

The miniſtry of the goſpel doth not conſiſt in a bare opening of the letter (or raiſing of doctrines and uſes from the letter, which the wiſdom of man may eaſily perform) as the miniſtry of the law did: but in bringing men to the feeling of the Spirit, even of the eternal power of God which redeems, in turning men from the darkneſs to the light, in ſetting their faces towards the power. The goſpel is the ſubſtance of what was ſhadowed out in the law; and he that miniſters it muſt miniſter ſubſtance. He muſt have the heavenly treaſure (that is the ſubſtance) in his earthly veſſel, 2 Cor. iv. 7.; and he muſt give out of this treaſure into the veſſel which God prepares: and that he may do this, he muſt miniſter in the Spirit, and in the

the power. His words muſt not be ſuch as man's wiſdom would teach, or as man's comprehenſion would gather; but ſuch words as God's wiſdom prepares for him, and puts into his mouth. He that will be a true miniſter, muſt receive both his gift, his miniſtry, and the exerciſe of both from the Lord: and muſt be ſure in his miniſtering to keep in the power, or he will never win others to the power: but in keeping in the power, while he is miniſtering and ſtanding in the croſs to his own underſtanding and wiſdom, giving forth the truths which the Lord chooſeth to have him ſpeak in the words which God chooſeth, even in the words which are miniſtered to him by the power, in thus miniſtering he ſhall ſave his own ſoul, and thoſe that hear him, even all who in fear and meekneſs receive the ingrafted word, which is able to ſave the ſoul. For alas! alas! many have received words of truth, and apprehenſions of knowledge, whereby they hope to be ſaved; but how few are acquainted with that knowledge which ſtands in the power, which alone converts and keeps alive unto God! Oh! how many ſouls are to be anſwered for by them, who take upon them to be paſtors from God, who have fed the flock with words, *with diſcourſes which they have made*, and have ruled over them with *force and cruelty*; but have wanted the love, the tenderneſs, the light and power of the true Shepherd! Oh! what will theſe do when God requires his ſheep at their hands! Oh! that there were an heart to conſider! Ye ſhepherds of England, little do ye know what is towards you.

Now for thoſe things themſelves, which he ſaith *he principally endeavours to make known to the ſons of men*, there is a mixture in them; which, if he could ſingly apply himſelf to wait on the Lord in the meek ſober ſpirit, out of the conſultations, wiſdom, and confidence of the fleſh, it might pleaſe the Lord to make manifeſt to him.

The firſt particular of thoſe, which he lays down for truths is, *that the good things of this life, honours, riches, &c. unleſs we make uſe of them in the ſervice of God, are but*

but vanity and vexation of ſpirit; and in no wiſe any more capable to ſatisfy or content an immortal ſoul, than lime, and aſhes, and cobwebs, and ſuch-like traſh, are to ſatisfy and keep in health the bodies of thoſe perſons, who, through the depravedneſs of their appetite, deſire to feed on them.

Anſ. Chriſt, by his miniſtry, calleth his diſciples out of the world up to the Father; out of the honour, riches, and whatever elſe is of the world. "How "can ye believe, which receive honour one of an- "other, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from "God only?" John v. 44. And the rich man, he bids him "ſell all, and follow him." And the apoſtle John ſaith, "Love not the world, neither the things "that are in the world. If any man love the world, "the love of the Father is not in him. For all that "is in the world, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the "eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, "but is of the world," 1 John ii. 15, 16. He that will be a diſciple of Chriſt, muſt travel out of the earthly into the heavenly, leaving all that is of this world behind him, poſſeſſing nothing as his portion, but him who hath called him out of this country, from among his kindred, and from his father's houſe, to another land, kindred, and habitation. So that here they are pilgrims and ſtrangers, ſojourners and paſſengers, unknown to the world, and of a ſtrange garb, behaviour and appearance in it; not enjoying any thing as the world enjoys; not uſing any thing as the world uſeth; not honouring men, or receiving honour from men, as the world gives or receives honour; but honouring men in the Lord, and receiving honour from the Lord: and whatever they ſeem to retain of the earthly things, they hold as ſtewards under the Lord; not uſing or diſpoſing of them, as they think good, but waiting for the diſcovery of the Maſter's pleaſure, who is to order, in his counſel and wiſdom, all that is his own to his own glory. The law requireth a tenth part to be given up to the Lord; the goſpel requireth all, *ſoul, body, ſpirit, good name, &c.*; even that the whole poſſeſſion be ſold, and laid

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at the Maſter's feet; and he that keepeth any thing back, cannot be a diſciple; cannot be a ſoldier of Chriſt; but muſt needs *entangle himſelf with the affairs of this life.* This is ſound and ſavoury, even the truth of Jeſus, as it is known and felt in the renewed ſpirit; but his words, if he meaſure them in the pure light of God, he will perceive not to have ſprung thence; but to have been formed in the earthly wiſe part; even in that wiſdom, underſtanding, and comprehenſion, which is ſhut out of the myſteries of God's kingdom.

For his ſecond, *That nothing but the enjoyment of God, the fountain of all goodneſs, can truly and really content an immortal ſoul.* And for his third, *That no man can enjoy God, but he that loves him with all his heart, and with all his ſoul, and (for his ſake) his neighbour as himſelf.* I own both the things themſelves, and theſe words, and I felt a good ſavour in them at the reading of them: only let me ſay this, if he put men upon ſtriving after theſe things, without pointing them to the gift where the ſtrength is received to perform, and where the waiting is to be for the ſtrength, he cannot preach them profitably to his hearers.

To his fourth, *That though every ſincere convert, or regenerate perſon, loves God continually with his whole heart, as to the habit or root of holy love; yet whilſt he is in the body, he may ſometimes fail of the act or fruit of it, and may offend God through the love of the creature. Which truth (ſo much oppoſed in theſe days) is clear and manifeſt in the holy ſcriptures; particularly in the records of the heinous ſins of the prophet David, and Peter the apoſtle.*

Anſ. The Lord *circumciſeth the heart* of believers under the new covenant, *to love the Lord their God with all their heart, that they may live: he cauſeth the plant to ſpring up out of the dry and barren ground, which he watereth with his bleſſing; and he layeth his axe to the root of the old tree, hewing at it even till he hath cut it up: he engrafteth the Eternal Word into the heart, and by it is daily purifying thereof, fulfilling the good pleaſure of his*

his goodneſs therein, and carrying on the work of faith with power: and the miniſtry which he gave was for the "perfecting the ſaints," Epheſ. iv. 12, 13. which miniſtry exhorted and encouraged believers (from God's promiſes of his preſence and powerful operation of his Spirit in the hearts of his ſons and daughters) to "cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh "and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1. Now that the corrupt tree ſhall never be cut down whilſt man is in the body, that the heart ſhall never be thoroughly circumciſed to love the Lord, but be in danger of *offending God through the love of the creature*, this doctrine and belief ſpringeth not from the pure fountain of life and power; but the reaſoning part hath gathered it from its conceivings beneath the power.

The ſeed of God cannot ſin (for as he is pure which begetteth, ſo is that pure which is begotten of him): nor can man ſin, who is born of it, and abides in it: and if God pleaſe to perfect the birth and the work of circumciſion, what can hinder a man from being wholly born from it, and from abiding in it? Indeed a man that ſtrives in his own ſtrength, either againſt ſin, or towards holineſs, may well doubt of ever having it accompliſhed; but he that feels the eternal power beginning the work, and carrying it on daily, cannot doubt but he can perfect it; yea, and is encouraged (by the feeling thereof) to hope and wait on him for the perfecting of it.

As for his inſtances of David and Peter, they reach not the thing: for though David and Peter did fall; yet both David and Peter might attain an higher ſtate before they went out of the body, than they were in before they fell. David was a great prophet, and Peter a precious diſciple; but yet there was an higher ſtate to be adminiſtered, even the receiving that which the prophets propheſied of, and which the diſciple was to wait for. The diſciples who had known Chriſt, and had been taught by him, and had received a commiſſion from him, to whom all power in heaven and

earth was given; yet were to wait for a further and higher ſtate, even for receiving "the promiſe of the "Father, the power from on high," that he that was with them might be in them, John xiv. 17. John was as great as any prophet, and yet he that was leaſt in the kingdom was greater than he. Read the Acts of the Apoſtles; behold what a precious people was brought forth, even in the beginning of the apoſtles miniſtry; how full of faith, how ſtripped of the world, how ſingle-hearted to God, and one towards another! Acts ii. 42, &c. and Acts iv. 32, &c. What would theſe be, abiding and growing up in the vine? The cutting off of ſin is neceſſary while in the body; but to make the committing of ſin neceſſary while in the body, is a great derogation to the power of God's grace, and to the myſtery of faith, which overcometh the evils of the heart, and the worldly nature within; purifieth the conſcience from dead works, and is "held in the pure conſcience." Oh! that men knew the power, and the faith which ſtands in the power! for then would they not judge it ſo impoſſible to be cleanſed by the faith through the power. Oh! that light, that pure light of the Spirit, wherein the living blood runs, which cleanſeth from all ſin, and keepeth clean them that abide and walk in it! If this were but a little felt, ſuch doctrines as theſe (which are gathered in the comprehenſion from words read, without being let into the thing itſelf) would ſoon vaniſh, and find no place in the heart where the power dwells, nor in the underſtanding which is renewed, preſerved, and fed by the power. For the things of God are to be known and held in the underſtanding which is given of God, (which underſtanding is of the Spirit, and is ſpiritual) and not with the natural underſtanding, which cannot receive the things of the Spirit, but only a carnal apprehenſion and ſenſe of the words of the Spirit, according as a man can beat them out with, and comprehend them in, his reaſoning part.

To the fifth, *That the ſouls of the faithful are always growing in grace, whilſt they are in the body; and at the inſtant*

inſtant of death, or ſeparation from the body, our Lord Jeſus ſhall preſent them to the Father, without ſpot or blemiſh.

Anſ. Chriſt preſenteth to the Father, when he hath purified the heart and mind, and made it fit for God's pure life and preſence. He hath received the fulneſs from the Father, and hath freely given of his grace and of his truth to the ſons of men, to regenerate them, to cleanſe and ſanctify their hearts, and make them fit for God to dwell in. He ſitteth in his temple as "a refiner and purifier of ſilver," (who is like "a "refiner's fire, and like fuller's ſoap") and when he hath purified his diſciples, his children, his Levites, he preſenteth them to the Lord, for the Lord to tabernacle and dwell in: when he hath thoroughly conſecrated them, he preſenteth them as kings and prieſts to his Father, to offer up "an offering in righteouſ-"neſs," and to reign with him in his kingdom, Mal. iii. 3. Rev. i. 5. And there were ſome ſo purified by the leaven of the kingdom, (which purgeth out the old leaven by degrees, even till at length it hath made the lump wholly new) that to them all things were pure, Titus i. 5. There were ſome "come unto "Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, "the heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable "company of angels, to the general aſſembly and "church of the firſt-born, which are written in hea-"ven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the ſpirits "of juſt men made perfect, and to Jeſus the Media-"tor of the new covenant, and to the blood of "ſprinkling," Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. Thus it was before the apoſtaſy; yea, and after the apoſtaſy there were ſome found ſtanding on "Mount Sion" again, ſuch as had learned the "new ſong;" ſuch as "were "redeemed from the earth;" ſuch as "were not de-"filed with women," (with any of the falſe churches, or their falſe ways of worſhip) but had kept their virginity in the wilderneſs. If ye would know who theſe were, they were the "firſt-fruits unto God and "the Lamb" after the apoſtaſy, who were thoroughly

cleanſed by the ſpirit of burning, inſomuch as "in "their mouth was found no guile," but "they were "without fault before the throne of God," Rev. xiv. 1.—6.

The work of the Spirit of Chriſt in the heart is an inward work, and doth not conſiſt in outward times or ſeaſons, but in ſpiritual degrees and ſeaſons; which when they are finiſhed, the heart renewed, the ſpirit changed, the work wrought out; then the glory of the Father is revealed, the entrance into the everlaſting kingdom miniſtered, and then there is a ſitting down in the everlaſting manſion, even with Chriſt in the heavenly places which he hath prepared; where they that are redeemed, and purged, and ſanctified, ſit together with him: and as the body cannot hinder his entering into the ſpirits of his ſaints, and his dwelling in them, no more can it hinder their entering into him and dwelling in him.

Now there are ſeveral exerciſes of ſpirit, ſeveral meaſures of faith, and ſeveral degrees of life and glory. Some are under the clouds, ſome in the ſea; ſome in Egypt, ſome in the wilderneſs; ſome waiting for his appearance, ſome in the enjoyment of him already appeared. In ſome the work of regeneration, of ſanctification, of newneſs of ſpirit and life is but begun; in others it is interrupted, and they come to a loſs; in ſome it is much carried on, even towards conſummation; and ſome are already "complete in him;" finding fulneſs of ſatisfaction in him, (in whom the everlaſting ſprings are opened, to the full content of their hearts) and bring forth fruit to him, to the full content and ſatisfaction of his heart. In the apoſtles days there were thoſe that waited for his coming, and there were thoſe alſo that knew him come, and had received the good underſtanding from him, and were "in the "eternal life," John v. 20.

Yet this doth not exclude growth, for the fulneſs is infinite; and though a perfect ſtate may be attained in the perfect gift, yet there is a growth in the perfection (for Chriſt who was perfect, and in whom was no guile,

guile, grew in wiſdom, and knowledge, and in favour with God and men). And as God is infinite, ſo to that which is tranſplanted into him, there is no end of growth in him; but the tree, which ſtands in God's holy earth, by his pure river of waters, ſhall grow for ever and ever into his endleſs life and fulneſs.

To his ſixth, *That no man can ſo know God as to love him with all his heart, and with all his ſoul, but through the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified: who, by thoſe grievous ſufferings which he endured when he was upon earth, made ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God for the ſins of all thoſe that believe in his name; ſo that it is as conſiſtent with the juſtice, as with the mercy of God, to forgive them their ſins, and make them heirs of eternal life. God is juſt, and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus.*

Anſ. The knowledge of Chriſt is life eternal, and in his croſs is the ſpiritual virtue, which cuts off the uncircumciſion of the heart, whereby it is enabled to love the Lord. Now "Chriſt is the Lord from hea-" ven, the quickening Spirit," who ſoweth the ſeed of the kingdom in the heart, and cauſeth it to ſpring up; out of which ſeed the faith, the love, the hope, the meekneſs, the patience, and every ſpiritual fruit ſprings and grows. And he that is thus born of this ſeed, and receives the knowledge of life which ſprings from this ſeed, he cannot but love him which begat him, and he reapeth the fruit of all that Chriſt did and ſuffered in that prepared body: and God is both juſt, and the juſtifier of him who is thus united to Jeſus. But that man who knoweth not this faith, nor is acquainted with the love which ſpringeth from this root, and which is of this divine nature, but thinketh to be juſtified by applying to himſelf what is related in the hiſtories concerning Chriſt; this man deceives his ſoul, and miſſeth of the true juſtification; for God is juſt, who hath made the promiſe ſure to the ſeed, and hath ſhut out man, further than he is born of the ſeed, and found in the ſeed. But he who abideth in the ſeed, and in whom the ſeed findeth pleaſure and

abideth; he cannot miſs of the promiſe, of the everlaſting righteouſneſs, the reconciliation, the peace, the joy, and whatever elſe God giveth to the ſeed.

To his ſeventh and laſt, *That the ready way to receive Chriſt, the only light, by which we may ſee the way to heaven; or ſo to believe in him that we may be ſaved by him; is to forſake all that we have, that we may be his diſciples: that is to ſay, to take off our affections from things on the earth, and to ſet them on things above, where Jeſus ſitteth on the right hand of God; putting our truſt and confidence in the free and in the infinite mercy of God, through Chriſt; to be guided by him in all our ways, to be led by his good Spirit in all thoſe ways of grace and holineſs, through which we muſt paſs before we can attain to glory.*

Anſ. To know Chriſt as the light eternal (as he was yeſterday, is to-day, and will be for ever); to truſt this light in its convictions, calls, and free openings of love, to feel its living virtue, and in that virtue to give up all that is of the earthly nature and ſpirit; to ſell all for the everlaſting inheritance; this is indeed the way to life. But it is not the doing of things which is of value; for man may imitate and ſtrive to do much, and may go a great way *in forſaking all, and in taking off his affections from things* (inaſmuch as he may give all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet it profit him nothing); but it is the doing of things in the virtue, in the life, in the power which comes from Chriſt, which is of acceptance with God, and of advantage to the ſoul. Every motion and operation of true life ſprings from the root of life, and hath the virtue of the root in it; and that which differenceth it from all mens imitations, and from all the likeneſſes which the earthly ſpirit can frame, is the nature and virtue of the root being found in it. Therefore he that will be a true Chriſtian, muſt eye Chriſt the ſpring of his life, and keep in the feeling of his living virtue, and in that offer up all his ſacrifices of faith, love, and obedience to God; and he that will be a true miniſter, muſt wait upon the power

power himſelf, to be an inſtrument (in the hand of the power) to direct men to this, and to preſerve and build them up therein.

But alas! this is the ſtone which the wiſe builders have all along refuſed! The builders before the coming of Chriſt, they got a knowledge concerning the Meſſiah to come; but being unacquainted with the thing itſelf, rejected both it at its coming, and alſo the veſſel wherein it appeared. And the builders all along the apoſtaſy got a knowledge of Chriſt come, and preached believing in him crucified as the way to life; but the living ſtone, the living thing itſelf (which is both the foundation, the corner ſtone and the top ſtone of the building) they have been ignorant of, and ready to perſecute every appearance of it. Chriſt can no more now appear in Spirit, than formerly he could in that prepared body of fleſh, but the wiſe builders now are as ready to cry out againſt him for a blaſphemer, a profaner of God's ordinances, a deceiver of the people, (yea, a witch, or one that hath a devil) as the wiſe builders then were. "But wiſdom" in all ages "is juſtified by her children," and of none elſe. He that is born of the wiſdom, he can diſcern the womb, and own the fruit and branchings forth thereof under the mean dark veil, whereby it hides itſelf from all the fleſhly-wiſe of every age. "The kingdom of God cometh not by obſervation;" the wiſeſt Scribes and Phariſees could not know it by all the obſervations which they could gather out of Moſes and the prophets writings; nor can any now know it by any obſervations they can gather out of the apoſtles writings; but by being born of that Spirit whereof they were born, and by being formed in that womb wherein they were formed, by this means alone is the thing come to be known which they knew. He that receiveth the ſame eye, ſeeth the ſame thing, according to his meaſure; and coming to the life, wherein they received the truth; the words which they ſpake concerning the truth are eaſy. Thus as they were writ in the Spirit, ſo are they there alone truly

read; and being ſo read, they become exceeding profitable to that which ſo reads them; but man gueſſing and imagining and reaſoning in his carnal wiſdom concerning the things of God, and ſo gathering ſenſes and meanings about the words and expreſſions of ſcripture, doth but build up a Babel, which the eternal life and power will throw down (whenever he appears) with that which built it. Oh! that men were wiſe to wait for the diſcovery of the true rock, and of the true builder upon that rock! that that city and building might be raiſed in them, which God alone can rear; that they might not be left deſolate and miſerable in that ſtormy day, which will ſhake all buildings, and foundations, and rocks, but our Rock; wherein all profeſſors, and preachers, and high notioniſts, and whatever ſort elſe can be named, (who have ſtumbled at God's living truth, and at the pure appearance of his redeeming power, which in this age hath mightily broke forth, after the long dark night of apoſtaſy, to the ſight of every eye which is opened in the Spirit) ſhall confeſs with tears, ſorrow, anguiſh and ſhame, that *their rock is not as our rock, they themſelves being judges.* For though all ſorts of profeſſors generally own Chriſt as the rock in words, yet moſt miſs of the thing; and the ſubtil enemy hath made uſe of a notion, or apprehenſion of the thing in the carnal mind, to deceive them of the thing, to keep them from feeling the eternal virtue, the living power of life in the heart, which is the arm of God's ſalvation, whereby Chriſt draws man's loſt ſoul and ſpirit out of the grave of ſin and corruption, up to the Father. But oh! how are poor hearts deceived! who think, by a believing of what Chriſt did, of a ſatiſfaction he made for them while he was here on earth, though they lie in the pit all their days, though they carry the body of ſin about with them to the very laſt of their time here in the body, and have not felt the arm of God's power breaking down their ſpiritual enemies, their luſts, their corruptions, and redeeming them from them; yet hope to be ſaved in the end,

and

and to be preſented without ſpot or wrinkle to God! Chriſt had the name Jeſus given him, becauſe he was to ſave his people from their ſins; and no man can truly and livingly know the name Jeſus, further than he feels the ſaving virtue of it; but he that effectually feels the virtue, he indeed knows the name, and can bow at the name, feeling his luſts and enemies bowed under by the power thereof, and that raiſed up in him, which can worſhip the Father in the Spirit and in the truth. Oh! that the ſons of men knew; Oh! that the teachers and profeſſors of this age knew, what they have ſo long reviled and trampled upon! Surely they would mourn bitterly, kiſs the Son, and eſcape the wrath.

Now, if the Lord pleaſe to ſmite any one's earthly wiſdom and comprehenſion, (which is the main thing which ſtands in the way of the pure openings and revelations of the life) and give him the feeling of any thing here written, let him in fear acknowledge the Lord, ſacrificing to his goodneſs, and waiting upon him to be kept in that feeling, not magnifying or villifying any of his inſtruments; but in meekneſs and humility embracing the inſtructions of the Almighty, from the hand which he pleaſeth to give them forth by. As for me, I am but a ſhell; and if this party knew me, (who ſets me up ſo high, preferring me above many, whom the Lord hath preferred far above me) he would ſoon acknowledge me to be a poor, weak, contemptible one; yet this I muſt by no means deny, that the pure liquor of the eternal life, at its pleaſure ſpringeth up and iſſueth out through me; though I can alſo, in true underſtanding, ſay, that it iſſueth out far oftener, and much more abundantly through others. Let it have its honour, wherever it appears! and the Lord bring down that in people's hearts, which hindereth the owning and receiving of its virtue.

A Warning

A Warning of tender Bowels, to the Rulers, Teachers, and People of this Nation, concerning their Church and Miniſtry.

THAT there was a fight between the dragon and his angels, and Michael and his angels, concerning the New-Teſtament-church and miniſtry, is manifeſt even from the letter of the ſcriptures, Rev. xii.

That the dragon and his angels, though they could not get the better, as relating to the power, yet that they did get the better as relating to the form, inſomuch as that they overcame the third part of the true miniſters, and drew them from their ſtanding in the firmament of God's power, off to their earthly miniſtry; and that the church herſelf alſo was fain to fly into the wilderneſs, from the face of the dragon, for her ſafety and preſervation, where ſhe was to be nouriſhed and fed by God all the time of antichriſt's reign; this likewiſe is not only revealed in the Spirit, but is alſo manifeſt from the letter, Rev. xii.

That after this flight of the true church, and overcoming of the true miniſtry, the dragon erected his falſe church and miniſtry (which had but at beſt the form without the power) over all nations, peoples, multitudes, and tongues; this is alſo as evident, to them that read the prophecies of the Revelations in the light of that Spirit that wrote them. Is not the falſe woman (after the true woman was fled) manifeſtly deſcribed? Rev. xvii. which hath a bewitching cup of fornications, ver. 2. 4. Mark, ſhe hath not the true "cup of bleſſing," her cup is not filled with the "wine of the kingdom," it is not the cup of the true ſpouſe, (which keeps chaſte and loyal to the bed of the huſband) but the cup of fornications, wherein is a form

form of doctrine, and discipline, and order, and church-government, which leads from the life, which bewitches from the power, which lulls asleep in a form of profession and worship of Christ, without knowledge of, guidance by, and subjection to his Spirit. And this is the government, ministry, and way of antichrist, wherever it is found; how curiously soever the cup be gilded, yet it is but the cup of fornication, which bewitcheth the heart with its golden appearance, and then leads it into adultery from the life. And the dragon doth not only set up a false church over the nations, (in many parts whereof the truth had before appeared) Rev. xvii. 15. but a false ministry also. There is a false prophet (which deceiveth with miracles and false appearances of truth) advanced in this corrupt state; which false prophet continues and upholds his deceit over the nations, till the mighty appearance of Christ, in Spirit and power, doth judge him, Rev. xix. 20. 2 Thess. ii. 8. There is a beast with "horns like a lamb," who "doth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth," &c. Rev. xiii. 13, 14. Insomuch that he draws the kings and inhabiters of the earth (in a mystery of deceit) into the bed of whoredom and false worship, instead of the pure way of life, and pure worship of the living God, in his Spirit, and in his truth, Rev. xvii. 2.

Is it not further manifest, that this false church and false ministry, set up in the world by the power of the dragon, persecuted God's witnesses to the truth, in all the ages of antichrist's reign? So soon as ever the church was fled into the wilderness, the dragon forthwith went to "make war with the remnant of her seed, "which kept the commandments of God, and had "the testimony of Jesus Christ, Rev. xii. 17. And "it was given unto him to make war with the saints, "and to overcome them; and power was given him "over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. And all "that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose "names

" names are not written in the book of life, of the " Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world. If " any man have an ear, let him hear," Rev. xiii. 7, " 8, 9. And he had power to give life unto the " image of the beaſt, that the image of the beaſt " ſhould both ſpeak, and cauſe that as many as would " not worſhip the image of the beaſt ſhould be killed. " And he cauſeth all, both ſmall and great, rich and " poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their " right hand, or in their forehead. And that no man " might buy or ſell, ſave he that had the mark, or " the name of the beaſt, or the number of his name," Rev. xiii. 15, 16, 17. Yea, " the woman " (the falſe church, which the dragon had ſet up, by his power in the nations, inſtead of the true) " was drunken " with the blood of the ſaints, and with the blood of " the martyrs of Jeſus," Rev. xvii. 6. Oh! the miſery, and lamentable hard uſage of the witneſſes of Jeſus, who have been true lambs! born of the power, faithful to the power, witneſſing againſt every form and appearance of religion, doctrine, and worſhip, which hath appeared without the power, even in the days of greateſt profeſſion and higheſt devotion under the apoſtaſy from the power; how have theſe been hunted, perſecuted, devoured by the wolves in the ſheeps clothing, who had got the outſide, the garment, the name of Chriſt and Chriſtianity, the profeſſion of church, miniſtry, and ordinances, but have wanted the life, the virtue, the thing itſelf; and ſo have turned againſt it, and kept it down, that they might keep up their form! For let but the power appear, the form without the power is ſoon detected to be what it is. And this is properly antichriſt and antichriſtianiſm; to wit, not openly to appear in a direct denial of Chriſt, his truths, and worſhip, but to ſet up a way of knowledge and worſhip without his Spirit. Another ſpirit creeping into the form, that is antichriſt, (and the ſetting up obſervation and practice of the form out of the life and power, that is antichriſtianiſm)

chriſtianiſm) and this is the perſecutor, deſtroyer, and devourer about religion.

Now though the Lord hath ſuffered this falſe church and falſe prophet to reign long in the dragon's power, and to revile and worry his poor lambs, in every age of antichriſt's reign; yet the Lord hath appointed a ſeaſon to judge this falſe church, Rev. xvii. 1. to caſt the falſe prophet into the lake, Rev. xix. 20. Yea, and to torment with fire and brimſtone, all the falſe worſhippers, Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.

Oh! how deeply doth it concern England! her rulers, her teachers, yea, the whole people thereof, to conſider their ways, to conſider their worſhip, to conſider their church-ſtate, to conſider their miniſtry, that they be not overwhelmed at unawares in the bitter wrath of the Almighty, before which there is no ſtanding. Oh! that they could mourn, and pray, and wait for the eye of God's Spirit; for his pure light, which ſearcheth and diſcovereth all the deceits of antichriſt; that they might not be bewitched with any of the wine of the fornication of the falſe woman, "whoſe heart is ſnares and nets, and her hands as "bands," to entangle her lovers in, and keep them from the pure bed of life, where the Father of life, with the Son and Spirit, are enjoyed and worſhipped.

If men conſult concerning theſe things in the wiſdom of the fleſh, they will be entangled, and err; for that eye cannot ſee the myſteries of the kingdom, or the courſe either of truth or deceit. The goſpel, the eternal truth, the true church, the true miniſtry, are all ſpiritual, (not new ſhadows, as the things under the miniſtration of the law were, but ſpirit and ſubſtance) and they can only be ſeen by the ſpiritual eye of the children of wiſdom. The wiſe hunters, and diligent inquirers, into the conprehending part, cannot find the womb or the way of life, or the way of the worſhip of that which is begotten in the life, or God's way of miniſtry, which he hath appointed for the feeding and preſerving of the life. The prophets of old could not be known, diſcerned, or owned, by the fleſhly

fleſhly eye of obſervation in Iſrael after the fleſh (but they ſtill rejected them, eſteeming and magnifying the falſe prophets above them); how much leſs can the prophets and miniſters of the New-Teſtament be ſeen by man's eye? Are they the prophets and miniſters of Chriſt, which a nation cries up for ſuch, and which the eye of the wiſe men therein admires, and pitches upon? Or, are thoſe they which the renewed eye, in the light of the Lord, ſees to be fitted, ſanctified, and called forth by Chriſt into that ſervice? Ah! poor England! muſt thou fall into the pit before thine eyes be opened!

The great controverſy of this age is about church and miniſtry, which muſt carry it, the form or the power? Whether the church and miniſtry ſhall take place which was before the apoſtaſy, or that which hath ſprung up in or ſince the apoſtaſy? Whether man's wiſdom ſhall determine which is the true church, and its true miniſtry, or whether the Spirit of God ſhall determine it? Whether a nation, with the miniſters it ſets up, ſhall be the church and miniſtry? Or whether God's holy nation, (which he calleth and ſanctifieth by his Spirit) and the miniſters which he chuſeth, and ſendeth to gather and build up his in the holy faith, and pure power of life, ſhall be the church and miniſtry? Our eyes wait on the Lord to ſee this controverſy determined, and our hope of help is in his arm; nor are we at all affrighted at the riſing of any ſtrength againſt us, (our hearts being given up to God's truth, and to ſuffer for its teſtimony, according to God's will, meekly and patiently in his ſtrength) but we pity this poor land; yea, in the depth of bowels we pity the rulers, the teachers, and people therein. Oh! that they might be humbled, and in fear of the great God, ſurrender to him his due, before he appear in his ſtrength to force it from them.

Of

Of the Kingdom, Laws, and Government of CHRIST in the Heart and Conſcience; its Inoffenſiveneſs to all juſt Laws and Governments of the Kingdoms of Men.

CHRIST's kingdom, God's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, (for they are all one and the ſame) is that ſeed of eternal life which God hath hid in the hearts of the ſons of men, whereby he gathereth them back unto himſelf, bringeth them under the yoke of his government, ruleth over them, and reigneth in them.

This kingdom is likened to a grain of muſtard-ſeed, for its ſmallneſs; to a pearl, for its riches, value, and worth; and to leaven, for its ſpreading nature. And many other parables did Chriſt make uſe of to diſcover it by: as to a piece of ſilver, which the woman that loſt it, lighting the candle, ſweeping the houſe, and ſearching it diligently, at length found it even there where ſhe had loſt it.

Man fallen from God, is become loſt as to the Lord, and as to his own happineſs in the Lord; being driven from his bleſſed preſence and divine image, life, and Spirit, into the earthly ſpirit, image, and life, which he choſe: yet, in this earth, in this field of the world, God hath hid ſomewhat, even the everlaſting pearl; which, when man is awakened to ſeek, and findeth in the living breath, in the eternal light of life, it is able to redeem him; it is able to overſpread (he becoming ſubject to the laws, leadings, teachings, and power of it) and leaven him into the likeneſs and image of the pure life and Spirit.

Oh! that men knew the gift of God! Oh! that men knew the purchaſe of the blood of Chriſt! Oh! that

that men knew that ſpiritual good thing, which Chriſt (who died for them) hath given to redeem them by! that in that they might be united to Chriſt, and ſo by him be renewed and reſtored to God. For as the Father receiveth none but through the Son, ſo the Son receiveth none but in that gift which he beſtoweth from the Father. He owneth no faith, no love, no hope, no repentance, no obedience, but what ſpringeth from that, and ſtandeth in that.

Now as man is born of this, is leavened by this, (as he becomes a fool in his own earthly wiſdom and excellency of the fallen ſpirit, and becomes a babe, a child, a ſimple innocent, &c.) ſo he enters into the kingdom, being ingrafted into the root, through the virtue of this which is given him from the root, and ſo grows up in this, and this in him. And here is the new nature, the new life, the new heart, the new ſpirit, in which the unity and fellowſhip with God is again known, and the diſunion with the world, the wiſdom, the intereſts, the faſhions, the cuſtoms, the fears, the hopes, the delights, the joys of this world, and whatever elſe is of it. For Chriſt, as he is not of the world, ſo he calleth men out of the world; and they which follow him, and become his diſciples, go out of the world after him; that is, travel in ſpirit and converſation from what is of the earth, from whatever is "not of the Father, but of the world. "They are not of the world, as I am not of the "world, (ſaith Chriſt concerning his diſciples, John "xvii.) therefore the world hateth them."

The laws of this kingdom are given forth in the kingdom, from the covenant of life, which is made there in Chriſt. They are written in the heart, in the mind, as far as it is renewed. There the fear is put, there the eternal wiſdom is opened, there is Sion known, and the Jeruſalem which is from above, and the laws of eternal life iſſue freſh from it, and are revealed by the life in the heart which is turned towards the life. There ſin is reproved, and everlaſting righteouſneſs manifeſted in the light which cannot deceive:

ceive: and as the heart is made ſubject under the yoke, ſo ſin is wrought out, and righteouſneſs brought in; and under the croſs or yoke of life the blood of the everlaſting covenant runs through the veſſel, to keep it pure, ſweet, clean, and freſh in the life.

This then is the government of Chriſt, to be ſubject to his Spirit, which appears and opens his will, in the gift of grace which comes from him; to feel his living breath, by which the heart is begotten to God, out of the region of darkneſs; to know the movings, the ſtirrings, the leadings, the ſteps of the Lamb, who is "the Captain of our ſalvation;" and to follow him wherever he goes, doing all things that he commands, forbearing all things that he forbids, "without mur-"muring, without diſputing."

Whoever will be of the inward Iſrael, the ſpiritual Iſrael, which Chriſt redeems out of the ſpiritual Egypt, and leads through the ſpiritual wilderneſs into the land of reſt, muſt know his leader, muſt receive his Spirit, and follow it faithfully. "If any man hath not the "Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his;" he is none of the ſpiritual Iſrael; and if any man follow not the Spirit of Chriſt through all the travels in the wilderneſs, (but either ſits down by the way, or lies overcome by any kind of enemies, and comes not to the end of his journey, finiſhing the warfare and fight of faith) he falls ſhort of the reſt. Oh! that men were awakened to conſider of things as indeed they are! For religion is not ſuch an outward form of doctrine, or worſhip of any ſort, as men generally (whoſe poor ſouls are deceived through the ſubtilty of the powers of darkneſs) are too apt and willing to apprehend; but it conſiſts in ſpirit, in power, in virtue, in life: not in the oldneſs of any form which paſſeth away; but in the newneſs of the Spirit, which abideth for ever; in being born of the Spirit, in abiding in the Spirit, in living, walking, and worſhipping in the Spirit; yea, in becoming and growing into ſpirit, and into eternal life: for "that which is born of the Spi-"rit, is Spirit." Oh! that the ſons of men would

hearken, that they might taſte of the ſweetneſs and riches of the goodneſs which the Father in his free love hath opened in the ſpirits of many, and hath let the ſpirits of many into! Oh! that men would ſuffer the wearing out of this earthly ſpirit and wiſdom, that they might become like God, be formed into, and live in his image! How long ſhall the deſtroyer in every age prejudice men againſt them in that age which ſeek their good with their hearts! How long will the world ſtand in enmity againſt the generation of God's choice, and provoke the Lord to wrath againſt them! Surely the ſpirit of this world will try it out to the very laſt againſt the Spirit of God! For indeed the ſpirit of this world is not ſubject to the Spirit of God, nor indeed can be, and ſo cannot endure the government of his kingdom (which is not of this world) to be ſet up in the ſight of it.

Yet the government of Chriſt and his kingdom is not oppoſite to any juſt government of a nation or people. Chriſt's government is a righteous government of the heart, or inner man, chiefly; which doth not oppoſe a righteous government of the outward man. Nay, thoſe who are Chriſt's ſubjects, and ſingly obedient to his law of righteouſneſs in their ſpririts, are more faithful to men, and more ſubject to any juſt law of government, than others can be: for their fidelity and ſubjection is out of love, and for conſcience ſake. But this is it which offends the world; men many times make laws in their own will, and according to their own wiſdom, (now the wiſdom of the world is corrupt, and hath erred from the guidance of God) and are not free from ſelf-ends and intereſts, not being gathered into that which cleanſeth and keepeth pure the naturals. Now that which is of God cannot bow to any thing which is corrupt in man: it can lie down and ſuffer, and bear the plowing of long and deep furrows upon its back; but it cannot act that which is againſt its life. It cannot be diſloyal to its King, to gratify the ſpirit of this world; but what practice or teſtimony its King calls for againſt the evil and

and corruption of this world, it muſt obey ſingly and faithfully.

God in every age ſo bringeth forth and ordereth his innocent lambs and people, as that they are ſtill offenſive to the preſent age. The Lord fitteth them, and calleth them forth to be witneſſes againſt the evils of the preſent age: how can they but offend it? Can darkneſs chooſe but hate the light, which ſpeaks againſt it? How can darkneſs in power and dominion bear to be reproved by a mean contemptible appearance of the light, in mean and contemptible veſſels? For God chooſeth "the weak and fooliſh things of this world, "and things that are not, to bring to naught things "that are." Look into former ages, how did God reprove the kings and princes of Iſrael? Not by the eminent prieſts and prophets, whom they expected to be taught by, but by herdſmen, by ploughmen, by prophets which they deſpiſed. How did he overcome the heatheniſh world, yea, and the Jewiſh corrupted ſtate? Was it by wiſe learned men, (by the learned Scribes and Phariſees among the Jews, or by the wiſe Grecians among the heathen) or by fiſhermen and publicans? And how ſhall the recovery out of the apoſtaſy, and the reproof of the antichriſtian world be? Shall it be by wiſe ſynods and councils of learned and orthodox men among them, (as they ſpeak) or ſhall it be by the learning of the Spirit, which ſuch as theſe contemn? When God hath the rich treaſure of the knowledge of his kingdom to manifeſt in the world, he chooſes earthen veſſels, weak veſſels, poor contemptible perſons: he appears there (where the eye of man leaſt looks for him) that "the excellency of the "power" might appear to be of him wholly, and that the veſſel might rob him of none of the glory of it. Now the Lord hath not only choſen, in this day of his great appearance in Spirit to the ſpirits of his people, mean inſtruments, but mean things alſo, fooliſh things, weak things, the keeping on of an hat, the uſe of ordinary language, the appearing in mean habits, and deſpiſed geſtures; yea, and in a fooliſh way of preach-

ing (indeed it is so to that which hath not the savour of the virtue and power of the life in it); and how can the wisdom of man but stumble at it? Who would think that God should require such things, or appear in such things? O living eternal power! how is thy mighty presence and appearance veiled from all that look for it in any way of man's observation, or judge it with the eye of man's wisdom! *Verily thou art a God that hast hid thyself from the earthly spirit in its utmost wisdom; yea, in its utmost search after the knowledge of, and in the midst of, the highest profession of religion!* Which of the wise, which of the scribes in this age, can discern any of the paths, or so much as one of thy footsteps? O! that men would fear before the Lord, and be sure to govern in that which is of God, and then they should harm none of his, nor hazard the shaking of their government! but whatever is not of God, both within and without, must fall in the day of God's power. Oh! happy is he who is now made willing to part with that which God is determined to rend from man, that his standing may be in that which cannot be shaken! for there hath been a great earthquake in this nation, both of things without, and of things within; and there yet remains somewhat to be shaken, both without and within, that the glory of God may have room to appear. O England! "kiss "the Son, lest he be angry:" let all such laws and customs as are not of him, fall before him; and whatever is of him, let it bow unto him, (both within and without) that his wrath break not forth like a fire, which none can quench; for the Lord hath mighty things to bring to pass, and he hath a mighty arm of power to effect them by, and what shall be able to stand before him that stands in his way?

AN

AN ANSWER

TO THAT COMMON

OBJECTION AGAINST THE QUAKERS,

That they condemn all but themſelves.

With a loving and faithful ADVERTISEMENT to the Nation, and Powers thereof.

OBJECTION.

It is commonly objected againſt us, That we condemn all but ourſelves; all the Proteſtant churches, martyrs, and worthies formerly, (many of whom were valiant champions againſt Rome, and divers of them ſealed their teſtimony with their blood) *and all ſorts of Chriſtians and profeſſors at preſent, who are not juſt of our ſtamp and way, though otherwiſe ever ſo zealous.*

ANSWER.

THE Proteſtant churches, (as they are called in way of diſtinction from the church of Rome) the bleſſed martyrs, who ſuffered for the teſtimony of a pure conſcience towards God, and all the worthies of the Lord in their ſeveral generations, who fought againſt the ſcarlet whore, were accepted of God in their teſtimony againſt her, and are not diſowned

by us, but dearly owned and honoured therein; and for agreeing with them in their teſtimony in ſeveral things, as againſt deriving of a miniſtry from Rome, (which Luther wrote againſt, and John Hus propheſied of another miniſtry to ariſe) and againſt maintaining the goſpel miniſtry by tithes, or any other way of forced maintenance, which (till popery grew very ſtrong and powerful) was known to have been free; and againſt ſwearing, &c. (Walter Brute ſaid, *The perfection of Chriſtian men is not to ſwear at all, becauſe they are ſo commanded of Chriſt; whoſe commandment muſt in no caſe be broken, although that the city of Rome is contrary to this doctrine of Chriſt*, Fox's Acts and Monuments, p. 460, 461. And ſee alſo, p. 495. *Thorp's Teſtimony both about Tithes and Swearing.)* For theſe very things, and ſuch like, (as for following of Chriſt, in not receiving or giving that honour which is out of the faith, and for teſtifying againſt the hypocriſies and corruptions of our age) do we ſuffer in this our day, even as they did in their day, from the ſame ſpirit that perſecuted them; which, though it hath much changed its form and way of appearance, yet ſtill retaineth the ſame nature.

But all things were not diſcovered at once. The times were then dark, and the light ſmall; yet they being faithful according to what was diſcovered, were precious in the Lord's eyes; and what through ignorance they erred in, the Lord winked at and overlooked, being pleaſed with that ſincerity and ſimplicity of heart which he had ſtirred up in them towards himſelf. But if they were now alive in theſe our days, and ſhould depart from the ſincerity which was then in them, and oppoſe the light of this age, they would not then be accepted of the Lord, but their former ſincerity would be forgotten. For the light ſhineth more and more towards the perfect day: and it is not the owning of the light as it ſhone in the foregoing ages, which will now commend any man to God; but the knowing and ſubjecting to the light of the preſent age. Even as in theſe our days, there was (ſome years

years ago) an honeſt zeal and true ſimplicity ſtirring in the Puritans, (eſpecially among the Nonconformiſts of them) which was of the Lord, and was very dear to him; and had the generations of this age abode there, they would have been able to have followed the Lord in every further ſtep, and leading of his Spirit: but departing from that into ſome form or other, the true ſimplicity withered, and another thing began to live in them; and ſo they ſettled upon their lees, magnifying the form they had choſe to themſelves, till at length their hearts became hardened from the pure fear, even to the contracting of a ſpirit of profaneneſs; inſomuch as they could mock at the next remove and diſcovery of the Spirit, as ſome new light; and ſo by degrees have grown perſecutors of that Spirit in its outgoings in the people of the Lord, which they themſelves had once ſome taſte of, while they were reproached for Puritans. And the god of this world, who at firſt tempted them aſide into the form, hath at length prevailed ſo far to blind them therewith, that they can neither ſee what ſpirit they themſelves are of, nor what Spirit it is they perſecute.

Let therefore people conſider the truth of the thing, as it is before the Lord: we do not caſt dirt upon any in whom the truth of God hath ſtirred and appeared in any meaſure in former ages, or in this our age; but this we teſtify againſt; to wit, the ſetting up of any form without the life: for it is the erring ſpirit that ſtill crieth up the form, to keep down the power, by the form, and ſo by the help of it to bewitch from the Spirit wherein is the life, and not in the form. This was the painted Jezabel of the apoſtles age; falſe teachers finely dreſſed up themſelves with the form of godlineſs, and then under this cover they could deny the power, and make head againſt it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. How eaſy is it for them to appear in the form of the doctrines of the goſpel, in the form of zeal, in the form of holineſs, to paſs in a nation for the true church; and then to aſperſe them for hereticks, who (appearing in the power) cannot but deny that form

which is without the power. This is the great witch of this age, (even that ſpirit of zeal and devotion which is beſt clothed and decked with the form without the power) which though men (who judge of the things of God after the fleſh) juſtify, admire, and much contend for in her ſeveral ſhapes and dreſſes, (ſome being for one, ſome for another) yet the Lord is ſearching after her, and will find her out with his eternal flames, which will make her manifeſt, and all her lovers ſhall dread her burning and bed of torment. Now as all along the apoſtaſy this bewitching ſpirit (this ſpirit which bewitcheth from the power) hath crept up under a form of church worſhip and holineſs; ſo the other Spirit (the pure Spirit of life, the Spirit of true zeal and fear of the Lord) hath ſtill appeared more and more out of the forms. Who were the beſt preachers, and moſt eminent Chriſtians in the Puritan days? Were they not thoſe who leaſt minded the form then; nay, indeed, who were moſt againſt the form, and perſecuted for their conſcientious ſtumbling at it? And who were the greateſt perſecutors then, but they who were moſt zealous for the form, both of the government and worſhip of the church of England? And where is the perſecuting ſpirit next to be looked for, but in the forms which ſhould next appear? And where likewiſe is the appearance of the true Spirit next to be looked for, but in thoſe whom the Lord ſhould raiſe up to teſtify againſt thoſe forms, and to be the ſucceeding ſufferers for their teſtimony, as the Puritans had been foregoing ſufferers for their teſtimony.

Yet if there be any perſons left, among any of the forms which have appeared, (whether former or latter) that have not loſt their ſincerity and true zeal towards God, them we own and have unity with, ſo far as they keep, or rather are kept, thereto. If there be any among the epiſcopal ſort that in truth of heart deſire to fear the Lord, and look upon the Common-Prayer-Book as an acceptable way of worſhipping him, we pity their blindneſs, yet are tender towards them, and would not have the ſimplicity perſecuted in them becauſe

cauſe of this, but rather cheriſhed. If there be any among the Preſbyterians, Independents, Anabaptiſts, Seekers, or any other ſort, that in truth of heart wait upon the Lord in thoſe ways, and do not find a deadneſs overgrown them, but a pure, freſh, lively zeal towards God, with an unfeigned love to his people, our hearts are one with this; and we cannot fight againſt this good thing in any of them, though in love to them we teſtify, that their form and way of worſhip is their preſent loſs and hindrance; yet we doubt not but that the Lord (in his time) will make manifeſt to ſuch the light of this age; which is the very thing the people of God, in many foregoing ages, have been praying for. But this is our lamentation, that forms and ways of worſhip abound; but the Puritan principle, the Puritan ſpirit, is loſt and drowned in them all; and that men are hardened againſt our teſtimony, not from the remainders of the ſimplicity in them, but becauſe they are erred from the ſimplicity, and fallen in league with another ſpirit, which hath lain lurking in forms of knowledge and worſhip (to tempt aſide from the ſimplicity, and to hide the ſight of the life and power from the panting ſoul) all this night of the apoſtaſy.

Now mark how eaſy and natural it is to that ſpirit to enter into a form, to cry up a form, to ſet up a form in a nation, city, or country; doubtleſs it had been done in this nation long ago, had not the mighty hand of the Lord withſtood it. When the evil and unclean ſpirit is detected and driven out of one form, if it doth not get another ſuddenly to appear in, and tempt with, it muſt needs loſe many of its ſubjects. The ſtrumpet, or falſe church, is forced (as God diſcovers her nakedneſs and lewdneſs) to change her dreſſes and appearances, to new trick and adorn her bed: and then, as if ſhe alſo were changed, and were now no longer the ſame, ſhe comes forth again with boldneſs, and tempteth the young man again to come in unto her, Prov. vii. 16. And thus "ſhe caſteth "down many wounded; yea, many ſtrong men have "been

" been ſlain by her," ver. 26. Who otherwiſe would have " pondered the path of life," chap. v. 6. had they not been enſnared by her flatteries, who " for " ſaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the " covenant of her God," chap. ii. 17. There is no more certain and ready way to ſuppreſs truth, and to betray the honeſty which is ſingly ſearching after it, than to preſent a form of godlineſs or worſhip, as the proper way of meeting with it: for hereby the ſoul is lulled aſleep with a falſe hope, until the freſhneſs of its deſire begins to die, and its life to wither; and then the fleſhly part eaſily grows into unity with, and zeal for, that form which indeed is of the fleſh; though it appeared and tempted as if it had been otherwiſe. And how many have gone a great way towards hell, and have been deeply entangled and diſtreſſed in the chambers of death, by entering into this ſtrumpet's church or houſe, which they then (through the ſubtilty of her deceit) took for the houſe or church of God? Prov. vii. 27. Conſider the thing a little ſeriouſly. When the evil ſpirit is driven out of his ſtrong-hold of groſs popery, whither ſhould he run but into epiſcopacy? When he is driven out of epiſcopacy, whither ſhould he run but into preſbytery? When he is driven out of preſbytery, whither ſhould he run but into independency? When he is driven out of indepency, whither ſhould he run but into anabaptiſm? When he is driven out of anabaptiſm, whither ſhould he run but into a way of ſeeking? And what is his end of running into epiſcopacy, but to ſave alive that ſpirit which was hunted out of popery, and could abide no longer there, and ſo the better (and the ſafer from being diſcerned) to reproach and perſecute the other Spirit, (wherever it appeared) under the nicknames of Puritans, Separatiſts, Browniſts, Roundheads, &c. And what is his end afterwards of running into preſbytery, but to ſave that alive which was hunted out of epiſcopacy, and to perſecute the former truly-zealous Spirit (where it ſhould further appear afterwards) by means of that form? Thus the forms and appear-

appearances of things change; but the ſight is ſtill the ſame, the evil ſpirit ſtill getting uppermoſt, under a form of godlineſs, and from thence ſhooting forth its arrows at thoſe that ſeek after purity of heart, and cannot but teſtify againſt thoſe forms where the impure-one lodgeth.

This then is the ſum of our anſwer in this reſpect; we are not againſt the true life and power of godlineſs, wherever it hath appeared, or yet appears under the veil of any form whatſoever. Nay, all perſons who ſingly wait upon the Lord in the ſimplicity and ſincerity of their hearts, whether under any form, or out of forms, (that matters little to us) are very dear unto us in the Lord. But we are againſt all forms, images, imitations, and appearances, which betray the ſimplicity and ſincerity of the heart, keep the life in bondage, and endanger the loſs of the ſoul. And too many ſuch now there are, which hold the immortal ſeed of life in captivity under death, over which we cannot but mourn, and wait for its breaking off the chains, and its riſing out of all its graves into its own pure life, power, and fulneſs of liberty in the Lord.

A loving and faithful ADVERTISEMENT to the Nation, and Powers thereof.

O King! O parliament! O nation of England! conſider before the decree come forth; before the ruin of the nation (with the powers thereof) be irrecoverably ſealed: for the Lord hath a controverſy with this nation, and he will plead with thee, O England! who deſireſt not, nor canſt not bear a government in righteouſneſs, for the ſuppreſſing of the evil, and encouragement of the good; but the good is ſtill ſuppreſſed in thee, and cannot grow as it ought, becauſe of the luſt of the nation againſt the purity of the life of God, and becauſe of the corrupt wills, ends, and intereſts of thoſe who ſtill are in power.

After king Henry the VIIIth had renounced and ſhaken off in part the pope's authority in this nation, he

he did not let it fall to the ground as an evil thing, but took upon himſelf the exerciſe of it, aſſuming to himſelf the headſhip and government under Chriſt in all eccleſiaſtical cauſes and matters in his dominions. The ſame courſe his ſucceſſors followed, keeping the very title which the pope gave to him of Defender of the Faith. And ſo parliaments in their days (as if the government of the church were a right and privilege of the nation, and not peculiar to Chriſt) have taken upon them to make laws and orders about the government of the church and people of God in ſpiritual things, as well as about matters of ſtate.

Now it would fairly and honeſtly (with the ſpirit of meekneſs, and in the fear of the Lord) be inquired into, *Whether the pope's power and authority in this nation was a true church power and authority?* That is, whether it was ſuch a church power and authority as Chriſt had inſtituted; or of another nature, even of a nature contrary to Chriſt, and to his inward government in the ſpirits of his people? For if the pope's power and authority was a true church power and authority, then it may be lawful in another hand, though not in the pope's; but if it was an uſurped kind of authority and government in itſelf, then it cannot be lawful in itſelf, nor ſerviceable to Chriſt in any other hand; but will prove an inſtrument of war againſt him, in whoſe hands ſoever it be put. And let it be ſingly conſidered whether the church power in this nation hath not been a curb to the riſing of the purity of religion, even a ſharp check upon the tender conſcience; but ſuch as the looſe (yea, profane ſpirit) would take pleaſure in, and contend for?

The true church power is only the power of the Spirit of Chriſt. That converts men to God, and that alone is able to govern them in the affairs of his kingdom, being converted. Man meddling with religion and church government in his wiſdom, is but a beaſt, and muſt govern like a beaſt, namely, with force and cruelty over the ſpirit and conſcience which is tender towards God. As the Lord God of heaven and

and earth never gave the converting power to any, ſo neither did he ever give this governing power to any, further than as they were endued with the Spirit; for that is the ſceptre of his church and kingdom, which is a ſceptre of righteouſneſs, which leads in the love and gentleneſs of the Spirit that which is to be dealt gently with, and ſpiritually cuts off, by its ſeverity and ſharpneſs, that which is to be cut off. And here are Chriſt's limits of government, which that ſpirit and wiſdom which exceeds, errs, and doth hurt both to itſelf and others.

Now if in the miſt of darkneſs, which hath long overſpread the earth, (for though there broke out a little light to diſcover the thick blackneſs of popery, and to cauſe ſome reformation out of it, yet the miſt was not expelled) this nation hath erred, her princes, her teachers, her parliaments, and all ſorts of perſons, in laying hold on, and eſtabliſhing a wrong church power; which power hath had a bad effect, namely, in ſuppreſſing the progreſs of the reforming ſpirit, and raiſing up a formal ſpirit, (if not a ſpirit of looſeneſs and profaneneſs) which ran backwards towards popery, and not forwards from it: yet let them not love error, and ſo ſtrive againſt the light which ſhineth forth to diſcover the error to them; but let them humble themſelves before Chriſt the Lord of all, and reſtore unto him that which is his due, leſt they provoke him to wrath, and cauſe him to take from them what they look upon as their due. For is it not juſt with Chriſt to take that power from men, which they (ſo long as they have it) will not forbear managing and making uſe of to keep him from his power? Conſider theſe things, O England! for they belong to thy peace, and toward the mitigation of thy ſorrow and miſery in the day of thy calamity.

This is from one who hath mourned over thee, while thou haſt been rejoicing,

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

Oh!

Oh! that thou couldſt know, at leaſt in this laſt hour of thy day, how to make thy peace with the Lord, and not begin that controverſy afreſh with him, which he hath already ſo much ſhattered and broken thee about, that the dregs of the cup (whereof thou haſt already ſo largely drank) might paſs from thee!

AN EXPLANATORY POSTSCRIPT.

WE read of the getting up of another power than Chriſt's in the church, after the days of the apoſtles, 1 Theſſ. ii. 4. Rev. xiii. 2. which power was to laſt forty-two months, even all the time of antichriſt's reign; by which power the beaſt ſhould make war with and overcome the ſaints in all kindreds, tongues, and nations, ver. 5, 6, 7. And all this wickedneſs and perſecutions of the ſaints ſhould be committed under a pretence of righteouſneſs, as if it were for Chriſt, and the well-government of his church, from a true and rightly-derived and well-balanced power, 1 Theſſ. ii. 8, 9. Now this power will laſt in one form or other, even till the very coming of Chriſt: and then ſhall that wicked ſpirit (in all his workings, in all his various appearings and transformings, as if he ſtill were for God, and for the right and orderly government of his church and temple) be diſcovered, by degrees conſumed, and at laſt deſtroyed, ver. 8. And then the kings or powers of the earth, which gave their power and ſtrength to the beaſt, (helping him to cauſe men to worſhip, Rev. xiii. 15, 16.) making war with the Lamb and his ſuffering ſaints by their laws, whips, priſons, fines, &c. ſhall be overcome by him, who fighteth againſt them with "the Spirit of his mouth," and by his "truth, meekneſs, and righteouſneſs," which ſhines in the hearts and converſations of his "called, faithful, and choſen," Rev. xvii. 13, 14. Pſa. xlv. 4, 5.

The

The power of Chriſt cannot hurt any of his lambs (it never forced the weak ones, the tender-conſcienced, but he carries the lambs in his boſom, and gently leads thoſe that are with young, Iſa. xl. 11.). He had rather have many hypocrites ſpared, than one ear of wheat plucked up, Mat. xiii. 29. That power therefore in the church which ſpares the hypocrites (who can eaſily comply with an outward conformity in worſhip, without feeling an inward life or virtue) but lights heavy on that which is tender and ſhy in matters of worſhip, (knowing that it muſt give an account thereof to Chriſt,) that is not the true church-power, but at beſt but a counterfeit of the true.

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THE

THE

GREAT QUESTION

CONCERNING THE

LAWFULNESS or UNLAWFULNESS

OF

SWEARING under the GOSPEL,

STATED and CONSIDERED of;

FOR

The Satisfaction of ſuch as deſire to ſcan the Thing in the Weight of GOD'S SPIRIT;

AND

To ſee the true and clear DETERMINATION of it in his Unerring LIGHT.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

THE GREAT QUESTION

CONCERNING THE LAWFULNESS or UNLAWFULNESS OF SWEARING under the GOSPEL, STATED and CONSIDERED of.

QUESTION.

WHETHER *it be lawful for Chriſtians (who know Chriſt, the ſubſtance of all the ſhadows under the law, and are in the new covenant) to ſwear upon weighty occaſions, as it was lawful for the Jews to do under the old covenant?* Or, *Whether Chriſt alloweth his diſciples to ſwear in ſolemn caſes, as Moſes did allow his diſciples?*

Anſ. For the clearing of this weighty controverſy, to all ſuch as ſingly deſire to know the truth (as it is in Jeſus) in this particular, that their hearts may bow to him therein, and not be overtaken with the reaſonings and ſubtilties of the carnal mind, (which never knew nor can know the power, but hath always been,

and ſtill is, ſetting up dead images of God's truths and of his worſhip, out of the power) theſe few things following would be conſidered of. Firſt, *What an oath is?* Or, *The nature of a right and true oath under the law.* Secondly, *The ground or occaſion of its inſtitution.* Thirdly, *The caſes wherein an oath was to be uſed.* Fourthly, *The proper end and ſervice of an oath.* Fifthly, *The ſuitableneſs of its nature to its end and ſervice.* Laſtly, *The perſons to whom the uſe of an oath was proper in itſelf, and intended and allowed by God; and whether there be any perſons to whom it is not proper, and to whom the Lord doth not allow it?* This laſt is the main, and will of itſelf determine the thing; but yet a brief conſideration of the former may not be unprofitable, to make way for a clearer leading and inſight into it.

Firſt, As touching *an oath, what it is,* or *the nature of it.* A true and lawful oath under the law was an engagement or bond upon the ſoul, *Numb.* xxx. 2. by the name of the Lord, *Deut.* x. 20. to the ſpeaking of truth in things *affirmed,* and to the performance of truth in things promiſed. It was as a ſeal to bind fallen man (man fallen from the truth, from the uprightneſs) to truth in his *words* and *promiſes,* either to God or man. This is the nature and uſe of *an oath*; to wit, to bind the ſoul to truth, to be ſuch an engagement upon the ſoul, as, if there be any fear of God there, it cannot but dread to break, knowing that "the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs, that taketh "his name in vain."

Secondly, *The ground or occaſion of an oath,* is the fall of man from truth, from innocency, from the uprightneſs which engaged him to truth before his fall. This made the Jews ſtand in need of this bond under the law, in their purpoſes and promiſes towards God; and the ſame thing likewiſe made them ſtand in need of it one from another, to ratify and confirm truth between them.

Thirdly, *The caſes wherein an oath was to be uſed,* which were chiefly theſe four.

1. In

1. In case of a promise, or vow to God. } That the truth, integrity, and plain intention of the heart might stand, and there might be no departing therefrom, in the thing promised,
2. In case of promise to man. } either to God or man; an oath in that state was found useful to bind the soul thereto.

3. In case of pronouncing or declaring the truth of a thing, which was weighty, that there might be clear and satisfactory ground of belief.

4. In case of controversy between parties, where the controversy could not be determined, but by taking the confession of the one party for truth; there that party was to seal his confession with an oath, and so the other to rest satisfied therewith, and the controversy thereupon end.

Fourthly, *The end of an oath*, which is for final confirmation, and avoiding of all further strife and contention about the thing sworn to. By binding the thing (promised or affirmed) with an oath, the thing is confirmed; and now there is no more strife in the heart concerning the thing, if relating to God, or between man and man in things relating to them; but the striving nature is bound down by the oath of God, wherewith the thing is ratified, and so the doubt and uncertainty removed, and the contest ended. Thus of right it ought to be, and is, where the oath is forcible and in its proper service.

Fifthly, *The suitableness of its nature to the end aimed at by it.* Man out of the Christian life, can go no further than to engage himself by the fear and dread of that God, whom he professeth to worship and serve, and who cannot but be jealous of his name and honour, and ready to vindicate the taking of it in vain. Man under the law could not bind himself to God, in any promise or service more than this; nor can there be any greater bond or seal of truth given by one man to another, in the fallen state, than this. And he that will venture to break this, what but deceit and treachery can be expected from him? inso-

much as no other engagement from him can be of weight, he hereby manifesting the want of that in his mind and spirit, whereupon all ties are to fasten.

Sixthly, *The persons to whom the use of an oath was proper and lawful, and for whom it was instituted; and whether there be any persons to whom it is not proper and lawful, and for whose use it was not instituted?*

To find out this distinctly and truly, we must consider the several conditions of man since the creation; and observe to which of those it is useful and proper in itself, and allowed by God, and to which it is not useful in itself, nor allowed by God.

There have been four estates or conditions of mankind since the creation:

1. *An estate of innocency*; an estate of integrity, of purity, of righteousness, wherein man could not lie or deceive; but his promises to God, and his words to men, must needs be *yea*, and *amen:* for it was impossible to man, who was made in God's image, (which is truth) to lie or deceive, until the deceit entered him, and drew him out of the truth.

2. There was (and still is) *an estate of deep captivity*, wherein this truth and innocency was wholly lost; and man wholly corrupted in his spirit and nature, and wholly degenerated from God. This was the estate of the heathen, who knew not God generally, nor desired after him, but walked in the vanity of their minds, and were given up to their own hearts lusts. Yet among some of these the eternal principle of life was stirring, which did check them, and offer to guide them out of this estate; which they that hearkened unto did not remain in the fall with the rest, but felt the power of that, which reproved and checked them, circumcising their hearts; and, in their obedience thereto, justifying them in their consciences before God.

3. There was *an estate of shadowy redemption*, which was not the true estate of redemption itself, or they the true people which were to be redeemed; but a shadow of the redemption, a shadow of the redeemed people,

people, a ſhadow of the way and path of life; wherein were figures of the heavenly ſubſtance, the heavenly people, the heavenly things, the heavenly inheritance, the heavenly food, &c. But all theſe figures, in and under the law, were not the true heavenly and inviſible things themſelves, but outward and viſible ſigns and repreſentations of them.

4. There was, and bleſſed be the Lord, now at length (after the great, long, and dark night of apoſtaſy) again is brought forth, *an eſtate of true redemption*; wherein the ſoul is brought back from the death, from the captivity, from the fall, from the deceit, and from the ſhadows, into the truth, into the pure life, into the innocency, into the uprightneſs; wherein Chriſt (the power of God) is witneſſed, and the ſoul new formed in his pure image, and become a new creature, having a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, a new nature, a new life and ſpirit, (in the newneſs of which life it is to live and walk) a new courſe and converſation, a new place to walk and have its converſation in, even in that very heaven from whence it looks for the Saviour; wherein alſo all old things, which came in by the fall, and all the old ſhadows of the law, are to paſs away, and in this ſtate all things are to become new. And this is not only to be expected in the perfection of this ſtate, but belongs (in its meaſure and degree) to the very beginning of it: for even ſo ſoon as a man is ingrafted into Chriſt, even then he is a new creature, and all things then begin to become new unto him, and he is then to begin departing from all the old things, both of the natural or heatheniſh ſtate, and of the Jewiſh ſtate, until he hath left them all behind. The apoſtle ſaith expreſsly, "If any man be in Chriſt, he is a "new creaure: old things are paſſed away, all things "are became new." Chriſt, the Lord and Maſter of all believers, who himſelf was not in the world, calleth all his diſciples and followers out of the world. How, out of the world? Doth he call them from having any being or commerce in the earth, or in the

world? Nay, not ſo; but to come out of the *evil and corrupt ſtate, practices*, and *ways* of the world; out of the *earthly ways* of the Heathens, out of the *earthly ordinances* and *obſervations* of the Jews; yea, even out of every thing in both, which was not of the Father, but of the world; and this made them a gazing-ſtock to both, and the ſcorn and hatred of both, wherever they came.

Theſe are the four eſtates or conditions of mankind ſince the creation; in one of which, all men that ever were, have been to be found; and according to the eſtate and condition wherein man is found, is the law of God to him, and his requirings of him.

Now let any man, in the fear of the Lord God, weigh and conſider, to which ſort or ſorts of theſe an oath was uſeful in itſelf, and allowed by God, and to which not. Was it uſeful in the innocent ſtate? Or did God appoint it there, when man could not but ſpeak truth? Or is it uſeful in the redeemed ſtate, where a greater bond is received, and profeſſedly held forth, than the innocency of man's nature was? Is not Chriſt the truth, the ſubſtance? Is not he that is in him, the new creature? Were not all the oaths, and ſhadows of the law, to laſt till Chriſt the ſubſtance came? Is not this the bond of the goſpel? And doth not this ſeal truth, and keep to truth more firmly than the oath under the law could? And the greater bond being come, doth not the leſſer bond, which ſignified it, flee away and vaniſh, and the uſe of it now become both needleſs and unlawful? Men may reaſon ſubtilly, and perſuade ſtrongly againſt the truth; but we know certainly and infallibly, in the light of the Lord, that the uſe of an oath was not for man in innocency, nor for man under the power and virtue of the redemption by Chriſt, (which brings man back into the truth, into the innocency, and into that life and ſtrength which preſerves in the truth and innocency) but for fallen man, for man erred from the truth and covenant of God: and it is very manifeſt to us, that for a diſ-

ciple

ciple of Chriſt, who hath received the law from his lips againſt ſwearing, to be brought back again to ſwearing, (the bond of man in the fallen ſtate, and under the law) is no leſs than a denial of Chriſt, who is his life and redeemer out of the fallen ſtate, and who alſo is the ſubſtance, which ends the oaths; and he that hath ever known the pure power of his life, and received the pure law thereof in the clear openings of his Spirit, muſt not depart from thence, from the feeling of that, into the fleſhly reaſonings, into conſultations with the fleſhly-wiſe part, which will be ſure to give ſuch interpretations of ſcriptures as may avoid the croſs; but keep to that power which begat him, and to that principle wherein he was begotten; and there he ſhall never be able to get beyond the *yea* and *amen* in Chriſt, beyond the confeſſing of the truth in the preſence and life of it, which is the end and ſubſtance of ſwearing under the law; and therefore the apoſtle Paul, who ſeveral times, and in ſeveral caſes, refers to the prophecies of the prophets, (who foretold of things under the goſpel, in law-phraſes) renders the word confeſs, inſtead of ſwear, as may appear by comparing Rom. xiv. 11. and Philip. ii. 11. with Iſa. xlv. 23. That which the law called ſwearing, the goſpel calls confeſſing (each of them ſpeaking of the ſame thing, in the proper dialect of each); which confeſſing in the life, in the truth, in the renewed principle, is the weight and ſubſtance of that, whereof the oath was but a ſhadow. For what is the ſubſtance and intent of an oath? Is not the intent of it to bind to the ſpeaking or performing of truth? And what is it that binds? Is it the ſhadow or the ſubſtance? Is it the words of an oath, or the ſenſe and weight of the thing upon the ſpirit? It was not the *form* of an oath, but the *weight* and *ſubſtance* hid underneath, which bound the Jew under the law; and if there be no more weight and ſubſtance in the *yea* and *nay* of a diſciple under the goſpel, it muſt needs be more binding to them, and hath alſo more true ground of ſatisfaction in it (to other Chriſtians at leaſt)

leaſt) than a Jew's or Heathen's ſwearing; yea, and if the men of the world would but freely ſpeak their hearts, it would be acknowledged to be of more weight with them alſo. Who of thoſe who have obſerved and known our converſation, and upright ſpeaking and behaviour for theſe many years, (both towards the various rulers and authorities of the nation, and alſo towards all men of all ſorts) would not prefer our *yea* and *nay* before the oaths of others?

Object. *But though a Chriſtian may not ſwear in relation to himſelf; yet why may he not ſwear in relation to the ſatisfaction of others, ſeeing God himſelf ſware in that reſpect, who was as much in the power and virtue of that life which binds from ſwearing, as a Chriſtian can be?*

Anſ. 1. God (being not bound himſelf by the laws wherewith he binds the creature) may either himſelf, or by an inſtrument, (in his immediate life and power) do that which the creature hath not liberty from him to do; but that is no warrant in general, but the diſciple is particularly to eye the rule from his Maſter CHRIST JESUS, (who is Lord over the houſhold of faith, and who was as faithful in all his houſe as a Lord, as Moſes the ſervant was in his houſe) by whom the ſame God, who once allowed oaths to the Jews, hath now wholly forbidden ſwearing. And let the diſciple diligently and faithfully eye the laws of the new covenant, (which are written by, and received from, the ingrafted word of faith in the heart) he ſhall find oaths excluded there, as a part of the old covenant, even as a literal and ſhadowy confirmation of truth among the Jews under Moſes's diſpenſation for the time of the law; but the grace and truth itſelf is the ſubſtance, and the faith received is the ſeal of truth under the goſpel, both towards God and man.

Anſ. 2. A Chriſtian may not ſwear in relation to the ſatisfaction of others, becauſe he is to hold forth his light, his life, his principle, in the eye of the world; he is to teſtify to the worth and excellency of it, that it is a greater and firmer bond to him, both towards God and man, than any oaths either of the Heathen or

or of the Jews can be. Now his entering into their way of confirmation of things, which is ſhort of his own, is an undervaluing and diſparagement of the worth and weight of that principle of truth which God hath given him, and raiſed up in him: it is indeed a denying of it; for entering into the law-bond, is laying of the goſpel-bond by; and an offering of that as a bond, which indeed once was ſo, but is now excluded by the law of faith from being a bond any longer, and hath loſt its virtue. And if men would but open their eyes, they might eaſily ſee how little oaths bind, and how unprofitable they are to the end and uſe for which they are intended: but the *yea* and *amen* in Chriſt (the principle of life) cannot be broken; but he that abides in him muſt perform the *yea* and *amen*, which is firm in him.

Anſ. 3. A Chriſtian or diſciple may not ſwear under the goſpel, becauſe Chriſt hath brought in confeſſion of the truth, from the principle of his life, inſtead of oaths; which is made good not only by the apoſtle Paul's rendering of *ſwearing* in the law-time, *confeſſing*, in the fulfilling of it under the goſpel; but alſo by Chriſt's bringing in the *yea, yea*, and *nay, nay*, inſtead of the law's ſwearing. In the Jew, the oath was the ſeal or confirmation under the law; in the diſciple, who is in the life, and hath learned the truth of Chriſt the life, the *yea, yea*, the *nay, nay*, is appointed him by Chriſt inſtead of the oath. And though the ſubtilty and fleſhly wiſdom ſtrive hard to wreſt that place out of the hands of the ſimplicity, yet they ſhall never be able to do it: but he that looks on it with a ſingle eye in the light of that Spirit wherein it was wrote, ſhall plainly ſee Chriſt's drift to be to take away the ſhadow, even to aboliſh that uſe of ſwearing, which was proper and allowed to the Jews under the law, and to bring the confeſſion or denial of the thing, the *yea, yea*, and *nay, nay*, (from the goſpel ſpirit and principle in the diſciple) in the ſtead of it; which to make more manifeſt to the honeſt, ſimple, and naked heart, which is willing to take up the will and

and truth of God in every thing, with all the croſſes that attend it, let theſe few things following be uprightly conſidered of.

Firſt, That ſlight, trivial, and frequent oaths were not allowed under the law, but forbidden by the law, as the taking God's holy and dreadful name in vain.

Secondly, That though vain oaths were then forbidden, yet ſolemn oaths, weighty oaths, (ſuch as were needful and uſeful to the thing intended) were allowed under the law. So in all thoſe caſes before expreſſed, oaths were allowed and juſtifiable, ſo that they were but careful to perform them, and did not forſwear themſelves.

Thirdly, Chriſt brings in an exception againſt the uſe of this lawful ſwearing under the law, as the word *but* doth plainly ſignify, and forbiddeth ſwearing wholly, altogether, or at all. The law ſaith, "Thou "ſhalt not forſwear thyſelf;" (that is the ſubſtance of what the law forbids: it allows *ſwearing*, but forbids *forſwearing*) but I ſay unto you, ye ſhall not only avoid *forſwearing*, but *ſwearing* alſo, and that wholly, or altogether: "but I ſay unto you, Swear not at "all."

Fourthly, Chriſt brings in another thing inſtead of ſwearing, (a thing far more ſuitable to the truth, plainneſs, and ſimplicity of the goſpel) which is confeſſing the thing, or ſpeaking the thing in truth, juſt as it is, either by way of affirmation or denial; "but "let your yea be yea, and nay, nay."

And there is liberty enough left to a diſciple to ſatisfy any man concerning the truth of a thing by confeſſion, as much as by an oath: for is it not full as weighty under the goſpel to confeſs the preſence of God, or that he is witneſs, or that we ſpeak the thing in his fear, and in the feeling of his life and power, as it were under the law to ſwear *by his life*, *by his fear*, *by his power*, or the like? Is not the confeſſing of God by a Chriſtian of more weight than the ſwearing by him from a Jew or Heathen? O nations and powers of

of the earth! ſeek truth, ſeek righteouſneſs, and do not ſet up a form or image of things in your own wills (and according to your own wiſdom and inventions) above the power of God.

And let it be duly conſidered, whether the powers of this nation deal kindly with the Lord, in exacting an oath from his people, who (not in the leaſt diſaffection to them, but only in fidelity of conſcience to Chriſt, their Lord and Maſter) cannot but refuſe it.

The queſtion is concerning their fidelity and obedience to the king; that is the thing which an oath is required to ratify and confirm. Now the ſwearing itſelf (or formal taking of an oath) is of little value; but to be obedient, to be faithful in the thing of value. The caſe then ſtands thus: the Lord hath ſo formed them, that they cannot but be faithful and obedient. The Lord hath raiſed up that principle in them, which cannot hurt the king, or any man, nor cannot ſtand by and ſee him or any man hurt, without endeavouring to prevent it. Here is their ſtrength of performing good, and avoiding evil; and their *yea* and *nay*, from this principle, is the beſt ſecurity which they can poſſibly give to any man (and he who hath thus formed them in the *pure principle* of his life, hath likewiſe forbidden them to ſwear). But this cannot be accepted for want of the other confirmation; to wit, of *ſwearing*, which came in by the fall, and was allowed among the ſhadows of the law, but is forbidden by the goſpel.

Now, O king! ſhall not God's people be faithful and obedient to the Lord, as well as to thee? Shall they not be true to the principle of life, wherein they are begotten and brought forth in the love and goodwill to all, and out of enmity to any? Hath God raiſed up in them a principle which cannot deceive; and will not the *yea* and *nay* of that ſerve, (after ſo much experience, through ſo many changes) but they muſt either break Chriſt's command, and hazard their ſouls, or elſe loſe their liberties and eſtates?

Oh!

Oh! that men would wait on the Lord, for his pure fear to be written on their hearts by the finger of his Spirit, that they might come out of the fleſhly wiſdom into the womb of the eternal wiſdom, from whence our principle came; that they might be able to ſee and juſtify the purity, righteouſneſs, nobility, and worth of it; and that they might feel its ſecurity from all that is out of the good-will, out of the love, out of the life, and out of the peace; that ſo there might be an end of all ſtrife, rebellion, heart-burnings, plots, and all manner of wickedneſs and ungodlineſs, which have no place in it, but daily waſte and wither where it is ſown and grows, even till they come to an end; and till the righteouſneſs and pure innocency fill the room and place which they had, both in the heart and mind within, and in the life and converſation outwardly.

And let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity, and look well to his goings: for the darkneſs of the thick night of apoſtaſy is already paſt, and the true light now again ſhineth. Bleſſed is the eye which ſeeth it, and the heart which is eſtabliſhed in it, in the midſt of thoſe terrible and dreadful ſhakings and confuſions, which muſt not end here, but go over all nations. Oh! that this nation could once bow to it, that it might be happy, and its rents and breaches be healed for ever!

SOME-

SOMEWHAT SPOKEN

TO A

WEIGHTY QUESTION,

CONCERNING THE

MAGISTRATE's Protection of the INNOCENT.

Wherein is held forth

The BLESSING and PEACE which Nations ought to wait for and embrace in the latter Days.

WITH

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

FOR THE

Serious and Wise in Heart throughout this Nation to ponder, for diverting God's Wrath (if possible) from breaking forth upon it.

ALSO

A brief Account of what the People called QUAKERS desire, in reference to the Civil Government.

WITH

A few Words to such as by the everlasting Arm of God's Power have been drawn and gathered out of the Apostasy, into the living Truth and Worship.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

And in that Day will I make a Covenant for them with the Beasts of the Field, and with the Fowls of Heaven, and with the creeping Things of the Ground; and I will break the Bow, and the Sword, and the Battle out of the Earth, and will make them to lie down safely. Hos. ii. 18.

SOMEWHAT SPOKEN

TO A

WEIGHTY QUESTION,

CONCERNING THE

MAGISTRATE'S Protection of the INNOCENT.

QUESTION.

Whether the magiſtrate, in righteouſneſs and equity, is engaged to defend ſuch, who (by the peaceableneſs and love which God hath wrought in their ſpirits, and by that law of life, mercy, good-will, and forgiveneſs, which God by his own finger hath written in their hearts) are taken off from fighting, and cannot uſe a weapon deſtructive to any creature to defend him?

ANSWER.

MAGISTRACY was intended by God for the defence of the people; not only of thoſe who have ability, and can fight for them, but of ſuch alſo who cannot, or are forbidden by the love and law of God written in their hearts ſo to do. Thus women, children, ſick perſons, aged perſons, and alſo prieſts in nations, (who have ability to fight, but are exempted by their function, which is not equivalent to the exemption which God makes by the law of his Spirit in the heart) have the benefit of the law, and

of the magiſtrate's protection, without fighting for the defence of either: and is it not moſt righteous and equal, that fighting, which came in by the fall, ſhould come to an end in ſuch whom God draws out of the fall; and that magiſtrates (who have power given them to rule by God, and ought to rule under him) ſhould not require fighting of them whom the Lord of lords hath redeemed out of the fighting nature, and choſen to be as examples of meekneſs and peaceableneſs in the places where they live? How can he fight with creatures, in whom is love and good-will towards thoſe creatures, and whoſe bowels are rolling over them, becauſe of their wanderings in the luſts, in the ſtrife, and in the wars? Fighting is not ſuitable to a goſpel ſpirit; but to the ſpirit of the world, and the children thereof. The fighting in the goſpel is turned inward againſt the luſts, and not outward againſt the creatures. There is to be a time, when "nation ſhall "not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they "learn war any more." When the power of the goſpel ſpreads over the whole earth, thus ſhall it be throughout the earth; and where the power of the Spirit takes hold of and overcomes any heart at preſent, thus will it be at preſent with that heart. This bleſſed ſtate, which ſhall be brought forth in the general in God's ſeaſon, muſt begin in particulars; and they therein are not prejudicial to the world, (nor would be ſo looked upon, if the right eye in man were but open to ſee with) but emblems of that bleſſed ſtate which the God of glory hath promiſed to ſet up in the world in the days of the goſpel. And though by this means there may ſeem to be a weakening of the ſtrength of the magiſtrate, and of the defence of that nation wherein God cauſeth the virtue and power of his truth to ſpread in the hearts of his people; yet in truth it is not ſo, but a great ſtrengthening. For if righteouſneſs be the ſtrength of a nation, and the ſeed of God the ſupport of the earth, then where righteouſneſs is brought forth, and where the ſeed of God ſprings up and flouriſheth, that nation grows

grows ſtrong; and inſtead of the arms and ſtrength of man, the eternal ſtrength overſpreads that nation, and that wiſdom ſprings up in the ſpirits of men, which is better than weapons of war; and the wiſdom which is from above is pure and peaceable, and teacheth to make peace, and to remove the cauſe of contention and wars, and uniteth the heart to the Lord, in waiting upon him for counſel, ſtrength, and preſervation in this ſtate, who brought into it. Now is not this much better and ſafer than the preſent eſtate of things in the world; firſt, to have the cauſe of wars removed, and a ſweet, peaceable, righteous Spirit in the ſtead thereof; ſecondly, to have a peaceable and righteous generation (whom the Lord hath made and preſerved ſo) breathing to the Lord for peace, good, and proſperity to the nation, and magiſtrates thereof, and to ſtretch forth his arm to be a defence about them; thirdly, to have the God of heaven engaged by his power to defend that power and magiſtracy which defends righteouſneſs in general, and particularly his people in their obedience unto him, whom it is moſt righteous for them to obey, and for the magiſtrate (who claims his rule and dominion under God) to protect them in? Were not this much better both for magiſtrates and people than the preſent eſtate? Oh! that that were awakened in man which can rightly diſcern and judge!

Object. *But this is an Utopian ſtate, or a world in the moon. Is it poſſible that ever there ſhould be ſuch a ſtate here on earth?*

Anſ. 1. When the principle of God, which lies hid in the hearts of men (over which the corrupt nature hath grown, and upon which the ſpirit of darkneſs in men tramples) ſhall be raiſed and come into dominion; righteouſneſs, peace, and good-will ſhall ſpring up as naturally among men, as wars, ſtrifes, diviſions, emulations, heart-burnings, &c. now do.

2. There is a promiſe of ſuch a ſtate, "when the "lion ſhall eat ſtraw like the ox, and lie down with "the lamb; when the earth ſhall be filled with the

" knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea, " and nothing ſhall hurt or deſtroy upon God's holy " mountain;" but the nations, who have been full of war, ſhall throw away their weapons, become ſubject to the ſpirit of peace and righteouſneſs, and learn war no more; when the wiſdom of the wiſe, and ſtrength of the ſtrong, ſhall be broken in pieces, and the little child ſhall play on the hole of the aſp, and the cockatrice's den, and lead all. As certainly as the Lord God is true, ſo this muſt be in the Lord's ſeaſon: and will it not be happy when it comes to paſs? Who would hinder it? Who would ſtrive to keep the old heavens and the old earth ſtanding, which muſt be diſſolved before the new heavens and the new earth (wherein dwells righteouſneſs) can be formed and brought forth?

3. This ſtate was in a fair forwardneſs once, before the univerſal apoſtaſy from that truth and power which God had ſown in the earth, upon the breathing of and ſending forth his Spirit among his diſciples, according to his promiſe. Precious was that ſeed, great the growth of it, the woman (or true church) full of beauty and glory, and brought forth the man-child, which was to rule all nations; but it hath pleaſed the Lord to adjourn that day till after the night of apoſtaſy, catching up the man-child to heaven, and cauſing the woman to fly into the wilderneſs, where ſhe hath been hid ever ſince from all but the inward eye of the inward Iſrael: and the world in the heatheniſh nature hath been crying up holy church, holy church! to her who hath ſat upon the beaſt, and been drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus; but the tender ſpouſe, the Lamb's wife, the mother of all the lambs, hath been baniſhed from the earth, and a cruel bloody ſtep-mother ſet over all the tender-conſcienced ever ſince. Oh! woful, woful hath been the ſtate of the true church, and of all the children of truth, all this dark night of the apoſtaſy! but the Lord is putting an end to it: and though this falſe woman ſeems to be recovering ground, and ſetting her feet over the necks

necks of the lambs again, and begins to think ſhe ſhall prevail, and ſit as a lady and queen over the conſciences of God's heritage for ever; yet ſhe ſhall find that ſtrong is the Lord God who hath begun to judge her; and into the ſea which ſhe raiſeth ſhall ſhe ſink like a ſtone, and her fall ſhall be great and ſpeedy: for even in one day ſhall her miſery overtake and devour her.

4. After this long night of apoſtaſy the Lord hath begun to make ſome preparations towards this ſtate again. He hath opened his treaſuries; he hath let forth the power of his truth; he hath poured down of his Spirit to ſanctify and gather a people unto himſelf; he hath opened the principle of life in the hearts of many, and in a great meaſure drawn them into it; who, ſo far as they are renewed thereby, (and found there) are made peaceable, pure, meek, gentle, innocent, upright-hearted, and tender-conſcienced, both towards God and man. And though multitudes of reproaches have been caſt upon them, yet the Lord hath been pleaſed to cauſe their innocency and integrity to ſhine, to the wiping of them off in a great degree, and will in due time bring forth their righteouſneſs as the light, and their judgment as the noonday. And what remains toward the carrying on of this work, but the Lord's proſpering of this principle, and blowing upon the other? As the Lord doth this, ſo will it go on; and the nations, kings, princes, great ones, as this principle is raiſed in them, and the contrary wiſdom, the earthly policy, (which undoes all) brought down, ſo will they feel the bleſſing of God in themſelves, and become a bleſſing to others. Oh! that were an ear to hear! for this is the only way of healing this nation, (which hath been ſo grievouſly torn) as will be acknowledged when woful experience makes it manifeſt. But man in proſperity cannot hear, and that enforceth from the Lord (by the turning of his hand) the bringing upon him the day of his adverſity; which, could he have hearkened to in the day of his proſperity, might have been eſcaped: for God

doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; he is neceſſitated to it for his own glory's ſake, the preſervation and defence of his truth and people, and for the carrying on of his work.

Object. *But if all men were of this mind, and none would fight, ſuppoſe a nation ſhould be invaded, would not the land of neceſſity be ruined?*

Anſ. 1. Whenever ſuch a thing ſhall be brought forth in the world, it muſt have a beginning before it can grow and be perfected. And where ſhould it begin but in ſome particulars in a nation, and ſo ſpread by degrees, until it hath overſpread the nation, and then from nation to nation, until the whole earth be leavened? Therefore whoever deſires to ſee this lovely ſtate brought forth in the general, if he would further his own deſire, muſt cheriſh it in the particular. And Oh! that men would not ſpend their ſtrength, and hazard the loſs of all in cheriſhing pretences and names of Chriſtianity, but would pray to the Lord at length to open that eye in them which can ſee the lovelineſs of the truth, power, and virtue of Chriſtianity; that they might cheriſh that tenderneſs of conſcience wherein the truth grows and ſprings up in its virtue and power. (And then perhaps they would ſoon acknowledge the happineſs of the world to depend upon the growth of that principle, and of that people, who are now deſpiſed by the world, and cannot but be ſo by the ſpirit and wiſdom of the world, which lies in wickedneſs, they being drawn out of, and teſtifying againſt it.)

2. It is not for a nation (coming into the goſpel-life and principle) to take care before-hand how they ſhall be preſerved; but the goſpel will teach a nation (if they hearken to it) as well as a particular perſon, to truſt the Lord, and to wait on him for preſervation. Iſrael of old ſtood not by their ſtrength and wiſdom, and preparations againſt their enemies; but in quietneſs and confidence, and waiting on the Lord for direction, Iſa. xxx. 15. and ſhall not ſuch now, who are true Iſraelites, and have indeed attained to the true goſpel

goſpel ſtate, follow the Lord in the peaceable life and Spirit of the goſpel, unleſs they ſee by rational demonſtration beforehand how they ſhall be preſerved therein. I ſpeak not this againſt any magiſtrates or people's defending themſelves againſt foreign invaſions, or making uſe of the ſword to ſuppreſs the violent and evil-doers within their borders (for this the preſent eſtate of things may and doth require, and a great bleſſing will attend the ſword where it is borne uprightly to that end, and its uſe will be honourable; and while there is need of a ſword, the Lord will not ſuffer that government, or thoſe governors, to want fitting inſtruments under them for the managing thereof, to wait on him in his fear to have the edge of it rightly directed); but yet there is a better ſtate, which the Lord hath already brought ſome into, and which nations are to expect and travel towards. Yea, it is far better to know the Lord to be the defender, and to wait on him daily, and ſee the need of his ſtrength, wiſdom, and preſervation, than to be ever ſo ſtrong and ſkilful in weapons of war.

3. If the Lord ſhall undertake the defence of a nation by his Spirit and power, what can hurt that nation? What power of man reach it, to diſturb the peace of it? "The Egyptians are men, and not God; "and their horſes fleſh, and not ſpirit," Iſa. xxxi. 3. What could Sennacherib with his army do againſt one angel in the time of the law? How many of his hoſt were ſlain in one night? And what power then ſhall be able to prevail over a nation brought into the peaceable Spirit of the goſpel, and defended therein by the mighty power of God himſelf? Will not God be as ſure a defence over the true Iſrael, in the way and diſpenſation wherein he leadeth them, as ever he was over the repreſentative Iſrael, in the way and diſpenſation wherein he led them? Will he not preſerve and defend that nation whom he firſt teacheth to leave off war, that they ſhall not be made a prey of, while he is teaching other nations the ſame leſſon?

God promiſed Iſrael of old, that when they went up thrice in the year to appear before the Lord, according to his command, he would keep it out of the hearts of the nations from ſo much as deſiring their land, much more from entering and taking it from them in the mean time, though they might ſeem watchful after, and ſufficiently greedy of, ſuch an opportunity, they being caſt out of the land, and having had it taken from them before, Exod. xxxiv. 24. The Lord alſo can now keep it out of the hearts of the nations from invading or prejudicing that nation which he ſhall firſt draw into the peaceable Spirit. Or if he ſee not good to do that, he can defend thoſe that have followed him out of the earthly ſpirit, wiſdom, and ſtrength, by ways that man knows not of; nor may it be fit for him to know, till the Lord bring it forth. Iſrael of old was not to know the deliverance beforehand; but to truſt to the Lord. Under the goſpel, the Lord giveth more faith than to Iſrael of old under the law, and therefore may juſtly require greater confidence in greater ſtraits. And awaken, O earth! behold the Iſrael of the Lord, whom he hath begotten and brought forth in the earth, after the long dark night of apoſtaſy, and ye ſhall ſee what hearts the Lord hath given them to truſt him, in all the ſtraits and trials wherewith he pleaſes to exerciſe them, and what the Lord will do for them when they are brought to the brink of the pit, and when it ſeemeth impoſſible for them to eſcape utter ruin and deſtruction. The eye which the Lord hath given them ſeeth the Lord and his ſtrength; and the heart which he hath created anew in them, naturally feareth the everlaſting power, which reacheth both to the body and ſoul for ever: but as for whole multitudes of nations, they are but as "the drop of a bucket," and (in their greateſt wiſdom and ſtrength) but as "vanity, as the ſmall duſt of the balance, as nothing "before him, and leſs than nothing to him."

Conſider this, O ye great men! O ye wiſe men, and deep politicians! all ye have done, or can ever do,

do, in relation to overturning any thing that God hath purpoſed, what are ye therein? Or what will your work come to? It is juſt like "the ſmall duſt of the "balance;" it hinders not at all the weight of his power on the other hand, but he will carry on his work, bring to paſs what he hath purpoſed in himſelf, and promiſed to his people; and all your councils, wiſdom, ſtrength, hopes, reſolutions, and preſent or future advantages againſt him and his work, ſhall hinder him no more than the ſmall duſt in the ſcale of a balance, which the wind blows away, and it is not. Be wiſe therefore, O ye ſons of men! fear before your Maker; wait in his fear for his counſel, that ye may not be ſuffered by him to undertake any thing againſt him, leſt before ye are aware ye fall before him. Oh! let every one in fear remember that paſſage, "Lo, this "is the man that made not God his ſtrength, but "truſted in the abundance," &c. Forgetting the Lord in the day of proſperity, cauſeth much increaſe of the anguiſh and ſorrow of heart in the day of adverſity. O ye that are in preſent power! conſider how unwilling ye would be to have the Lord turn his hand upon you, and bring you under again! Oh! provoke him not, for he is able to do it, as he was to overturn thoſe which went before. It were far better for you now to fear the Lord, and prevent it, than to bewail and repent afterwards. Oh! reject not the love and counſel of the Moſt High (which would now preſerve you) as thoſe which went before you did.

There is a deſire in all men (in whom the principle of God is not wholly ſlain) after righteouſneſs; which deſire will be more and more kindled by God in nations, before righteouſneſs and peace meet together and be eſtabliſhed in them. Now ſuch and ſo great hath been the kindling of this deſire in this nation, and ſuch is the ſtate thereof, that nothing can ſatisfy the heart of it but righteouſneſs: this it longeth after at the bottom: this the governors which were before might have, and the governors that now

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are (by aſking counſel of the principle of God within themſelves, and keeping cloſe thereto) may anſwer the nation in; but if the conſultations be not with the Lord, in the principle of life which came from him, but with the wiſdom and policy which is of the earth, and from beneath, and not from above, that will incline to ſelf, and to corruption, and never bring forth righteouſneſs; nor can the bleſſing of God attend it, nor the peace which accompanieth righteouſneſs be reaped from it.

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

For the Serious and Wiſe in Heart throughout this Nation to ponder, that they may ſend up earneſt Prayers to Almighty God, and uſe their beſt Endeavours in their ſeveral Places and Stations, to prevent that dreadful Storm of Wrath which hath long hung over this Nation; that at length it break not forth like a Fire which none can quench, or like a Flood which none can ſtop.

1. DID not God, by the power of his Spirit in the apoſtles days, gather a people out of the world unto himſelf, and by his wiſdom (and according to his heavenly will) build them up into a church, or holy temple, for his Spirit to inhabit and dwell in, and for himſelf to be honoured and worſhipped in Spirit and truth, according as he ſhould teach them, and require of them?

2. Did

2. Did not the ſame Spirit which built this church not only ſignify that the love ſhould wax cold, and there be a falling away from the truth, and warn the churches of Aſia of the removal of their candleſticks, but alſo foretel of the total diſſolution of that building as to its outward ſtate, [upon the cloſe of the ſharp battle by the dragon and his angels, or falſe miniſters, with Michael and his true church and miniſters] inſomuch as the church herſelf ſhould fly into the wilderneſs, and her ſeed be made war with, and perſecuted up and down the nations all the time of the apoſtaſy afterwards? See Rev. xii.

3. Was not this deſolate eſtate of the church to remain and laſt all the allotted time thereof, which is expreſſed to be forty-two months, twelve hundred and ſixty days, or a time, times, and half a time, wherein the beaſt ſhould rule, antichriſt ſit in God's temple, and the dragon be worſhipped there, inſtead of the living God; and alſo the lambs of Chriſt, and witneſſes of Jeſus (who retain the worſhip in Spirit and truth, and cannot join with any of the falſe ways of worſhip ſet up in the nations) torn and rent by the woman which appears inſtead of the true church, but is not? Rev. xi. 2. and xii. 6. 14. and xiii. 4. and xvii. 6.

4. Doth not this woman continue deceiving the nations and kings of the earth (whom ſhe cauſeth to drink of her cup of knowledge, worſhip, doctrine, and diſcipline, whereby ſhe blindeth their eyes, bewitcheth their hearts, and maketh them take her for the true church, who, notwithſtanding all her glorious appearance, is but *Babylon in a myſtery*, and, notwithſtanding all her pretences for Chriſt, doth drink the blood of his true ſaints and witneſſes); I ſay, doth ſhe not continue her deceit till the very hour of her judgment, and until ſhe hath brought the dreadful vials of the wrath of God both upon herſelf, and upon all that continue joining with her? Rev. xvii. 2. &c.

5. Is

5. Is there not to be an end of this night of apoſtaſy, and of the falſe church, with all her various habits, and dreſſes, and new paints, and arts of deceit, (though both have continued long) wherein Chriſt the Lamb comes forth in his power to fight with the beaſt, and the woman which rides thereon, and to ſmite the earth which remains infected with her fornications, (which withdraw and ſteal away the heart from the pure life and Spirit of Chriſt, and from his pure, living, ſpiritual worſhip, into a falſe, invented, dead, formal worſhip) that ſo he may reſtore and ſet up his pure ſpiritual worſhip again? Rev. xix. 11.

6. Are not the kings, powers, and inhabitants of the earth in great danger of fighting againſt the Lamb, in defence of this falſe church againſt his true church, (when he again comes to ſet it up in nations, after the expiration of the long night of apoſtaſy) even to the hazard of utterly ruining themſelves thereby? For thoſe that fight againſt the Lamb, muſt needs be overcome by him; his inviſible ſtrength and armies being much ſtronger than the viſible armies, and all the outward ſtrength in nations; though, to the outward eye, ſuch may appear very great and invincible. Rev. xvii. 14.

7. Shall not the "kings of the earth," and the remaining powers at laſt (after the overthrow of many for joining to her, and ſtriving to uphold her) "hate "the whore" (which hath corrupted the earth with her fornications, drank the blood of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, brought miſery and deſolation on nations, &c.) "make her deſolate, and burn her fleſh "with fire?" And were it not far better for them to do it before, rather than to hazard the ruining of themſelves by ſeeking to uphold her? Rev. xvii. 16.

8. Is it poſſible for any nation (or any power in any nation) to hinder the ſhining forth of God's light therein, after the long night of apoſtaſy? There is a ſpiritual day, as well as a natural day. There was a ſpiritual day before the apoſtaſy, in the days of the apoſtles;

apoſtles; and there is to be a ſpiritual day again after the apoſtaſy, upon the Spirit of life's entering into the witneſſes, their riſing and ſtanding on their feet, and the light of God's ſhining forth from them. The ſpiritual day dependeth upon the ſhining of God's Spirit in the hearts of people, (which did once ſhine forth, and doth begin to ſhine forth again) as the natural day dependeth upon the ſhining of the ſun. Now who can hinder the ariſing or ſhining of the Sun of righteouſneſs in the hearts of God's people? If ye can, then may ye prevent the carrying on of God's work of reformation in this nation, and throughout the world; but it is eaſier for you to ſtop the ſhining of the ſun in the firmament. Oh! that the eye were opened which can ſee the way of peace, that the preſent governors might be bleſſed, and the nation bleſſed in them, and not the ſpirit of the nation (by a ſecret kindling, which none knows whence it comes) brought over them as a flood, as it was over them that went before them.

In that fear which God works in the heart (and out of the compaſs of that carnal wiſdom and ſtrength, on which man relies) is the wiſdom, counſel, and preſervation of the Moſt High; both of particular perſons, and alſo of nations. *O Lord my God, if it may pleaſe thee, open the ear that can hear thy voice, that miſery may be avoided, and thy peace and bleſſing ſought after and enjoyed; or at leaſt ſome of the force of that bitter ſtorm (which ſweepeth away and maketh deſolate, even as the abomination of deſolation hath entered, and of a long time made the earth deſolate of the life and power of godlineſs) broken, that this nation might not be ſwallowed up in the dreadful breakings forth of thy diſpleaſure, but may be prepared by thy correcting hand, and fitted for the day of thy mercy.*

A BRIEF

A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF WHAT THE

PEOPLE called QUAKERS desire,

In Reference to the CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

THERE are three things which we cannot but earneſtly deſire in our hearts, and pray to the Lord for, as the proper means of ſettling aright the ſpirit of this nation; as alſo neceſſary for the growth of God's pure living truth, and as juſt and equal in themſelves.

1. Univerſal liberty for all ſorts to worſhip God, according as Chriſt ſhall open mens eyes to ſee the truth, and according as he ſhall perſuade their hearts by his Spirit; who is every man's Maſter in religion, to whom they muſt ſtand or fall in all they do therein, Rom. xiv. 4.

Now if any man walk diſorderly, and contrary to the light of Chriſt's Spirit either in doctrine or worſhip; that power which converts to God, is to reprove and correct ſuch an offender with the ſpiritual rod and ſword, that he may be again reſtored to the truth and obedience of the Spirit; but the magiſtrate is not for any ſuch thing to impriſon, fine, baniſh, or put him to death. For Chriſt is the judge of his people in the things of his kingdom, Heb. x. 30. and he hath appointed to have his ſpiritual weapons in a readineſs,

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to revenge every disobedience and rebellion against his Spirit, 2 Cor. x. 4. The bringing in and applying of the magistrate's sword to this work, was never by the true church, in whose hand the sword of the Spirit was ever found sufficient; but the false church, not having the sword of the Spirit, is fain to uphold herself by the carnal weapons, or else she would soon fall. But the Lord God is wresting these out of her hands, and then his light will break forth without interruption, and her shame and nakedness soon appear.

2. That no laws formerly made, contrary to the principle of equity and righteousness in man, may remain in force; nor no new ones be made, but what are manifestly agreeable thereunto. All just laws, say the lawyers, have their foundation in right reason, and must agree with, and proceed from it, if they be properly good for, and rightly serviceable to, mankind. Now man hath a corrupt and carnal reason, which sways him aside from integrity and righteousness, towards the favouring of himself and his own party: and whatever party is uppermost, they are apt to make such new laws as they frame, and also the interpretation of the old ones, bend towards the favour of their own party. Therefore we would have every man in authority wait, in the fear of God, to have that principle of God raised up in him, which is for righteousness, and not selfish; and watch to be guided by that in all he does, either in making laws for government, or in governing by laws already made.

3. Seeing this nation is in such a shattered condition, and there have been so many breaches, parties, and factions in it, that no party might be bolstered up in enmity and opposition against another, but that every party might be considered, in what might be done for their ease and benefit, without danger and detriment to any other party. And if I might be hearkened to, I would persuade those now in power, not to deal with their enemies as they formerly dealt with

with them, but as they would have been dealt with by them when they were in power.

I would alſo dehort and diſſuade all people from plotting or contriving againſt this preſent government (for they muſt have their day, do all men what they can); but inſtead thereof to pray for them, that they may ſee the former errors in government, humble themſelves before the Lord, and (by their meekneſs, gentleneſs, and righteouſneſs towards all) ſhew forth the fruit of his long-afflicting hand upon them. But if they ſhall overlook, forget, and neglect the Lord, who hath ſhewn ſo great mercy to them; and not in his fear wait on him, to preſerve for them the ground and intereſt he hath given them; and think that now they are able to ſtand on their own legs, and by their own wiſdom and ſtrength; and ſo aſſay to carry on things according to their own will, and in the ſtrength of their own wiſdom; and ſo not mind for what end the Lord brought them in again, and what he expecteth to have effected by them, but ſtrive again to ſettle the principles and practices which he hath been ſhaking, according to what ſeems right and good in their own eyes (meaſuring things by their own corrupt reaſon, ſelfiſh wiſdom, and intereſts, and not by the principle of God, common equity, and right reaſon); I ſay, if it ſhould come to be thus with them, ye ſhall not need to plot againſt them; for the Lord God Almighty, who with eaſe removed their enemies, and made way for them, can with as great eaſe remove them, and put the power into another hand.

Therefore, all people, be ſtill and quiet in your minds, and wait for righteouſneſs; for that is it which the Lord is making way for in this nation, and which he will ſet up therein; and he whoſe deſire is not after that, and whoſe intereſt lies not there, will find himſelf diſappointed, and at unawares ſurpriſed with what he expects not.

This is given forth, that the powers and people may ſee what is the deſire of our hearts in theſe reſpects, and how upright our hearts are towards them in what

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is juſt and right, and that we are not at all againſt magiſtracy, laws, or government, though we cannot flatter or bend to them in that which is ſelfiſh and corrupt; and indeed againſt God, and not for the good of men. It was written long ſince, and intended then for ſervice to the Lord and this nation, and his people therein, but the Lord ordered it otherwiſe. If he pleaſe now to accompany it with his bleſſing, and make way for the reaſonableneſs, equity, and righteouſneſs of it, to enter into the minds and hearts of them that are in power, it will be a good ſeaſon for it, and they will find cauſe to bleſs the Lord, for putting of it into my heart at firſt, and for the publiſhing of it now.

A

FEW WORDS

TO SUCH AS HAVE

Felt the Power of the endleſs Life drawing;

AND HAVE

Faithfully followed the Leader of the Flock of ISRAEL; who hath of late led his Sheep in ſuch Paths as have not been known all the Night of the Apoſtaſy.

O YE children of the Moſt High! who have felt the breath of the eternal Spirit begetting you in the pure life, and drawing you out of this world; out of the vanities, out of the corruptions, out of

the courſe and faſhions, out of the invented ways and forms of worſhip, (yea out of the very root and principle thereof) into the worſhip and Spirit of truth, and into the fear of the Moſt High, which is wiſdom's place and habitation, where the pure law of life is received, and the ſalvation begun, wrought out, and perfected. O ye dear plants of the right hand of eternity! fear not what is to come to paſs in this viſible creation (to break the corrupt ſtate thereof, and to make way for the ſpringing up and ſpreading of his pure life and righteouſneſs, which the corrupt eſtate, ſpirit, and principle of the world cannot but oppoſe, until it be broken and ſubjected) but ſanctify the Lord of Hoſts, and let him be your fear and dread; that he may compaſs you with the arm of his power, and hide you under the ſhadow of his hand, until he hath planted the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and ſay to Sion, in the ſight of all her enemies, "Thou art my people." The Lord my God watch over you night and day! and preſerve his living principle pure and freſh in you, and you in perfect ſubjection unto it; that ye may delight in what he hath begotten and preſerved in you, and ye may be ſatisfied in the openings and overflowings of the love of his heart towards you. *Amen*, ſaith my ſoul!

From Ayleſbury priſon in Bucks, where my life breathes for the conſolation and redemption of God's Iſrael, and for the turning of the captivity of the whole creation. 1661.

A FEW

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE Preſent Work of GOD in the WORLD.

WOULD any know what God is now doing on the earth, and what changes he is making therein? Let him ſink out of the earthly part, even from that which blinds the pure eye; and waiting to have the underſtanding and eye of his ſpirit opened in the Lord, let him read theſe things following.

The Lord God of bowels and compaſſion, and of everlaſting power and ſtrength, hath heard the groans of Iſrael, whoſe conſciences have been burdened, and whoſe ſouls have been bowed down, under the power of the beaſt, under the hard yoke of antichriſt, for theſe many generations; and he is ariſen in his jealouſy, in his indignation, and in his fury, to break the yoke, and let oppreſſed Iſrael go free.

He hath already ſtretched forth the arm of his power; the eye of Iſrael hath ſeen it, and hath in part felt the redemption (both inwardly and outwardly) which he hath brought to paſs by it; and *a ſong of praiſe* hath been ſung to him, who hath begun to deliver his people, and who is able perfectly to accompliſh the work he hath begun, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition he can meet with, whether from within or from without.

Lift up then the eye of faith, and behold a great part of Iſrael already paſſed out of the land of Egypt, and

the Spirit of the Lord awakening and rouſing the reſt, to leave their dark habitations in the land of darkneſs, oppreſſion, and bondage, and to travel towards the good land of light, reſt, and peace.

Ariſe, O Iſrael! ſhake thyſelf from the duſt, O captive daughter of Sion! behold the courage of thy leader; let thy heart conſider the arm of his ſtrength, and the rod of his power, wherewith he is able to daſh in pieces all his enemies. Fear not, worm Jacob, becauſe of thine own weakneſs and unworthineſs; thy ſtrength is in thy leader, and thy comelineſs (not in what thou now appeareſt, but) in what thy huſband will put upon thee, when he ſhall circumciſe thee thoroughly, and roll away thy reproach for ever.

Was all the ſtrength of Pharoah able to keep Iſrael in the land of Egypt, or to drive them back after God had brought them forth? Were all the enemies in the wilderneſs able to ſtop their paſſage forward? Were all the enemies in Canaan, or the ſtrength of their cities (though their walls might ſeem to reach to heaven, and the inhabitants thereof were tall and mighty) able to keep them out of the inheritance which God allotted them? Thy God, O worm Jacob, is the ſame for ever! he hath the ſame arm of power to ſtretch forth; yea, and his heart loveth his inward Iſrael full as dearly as ever he did the outward. Oh! wait on the Lord! believe in his name, truſt his love; hope beyond hope for the appearance of his power, and the Red ſea ſhall divide, and the waters thereof ſtand on heaps; yea, Jordan ſhall be again driven back; the mountains ſhall ſkip like rams, and the little hills like lambs; yea, the whole earth ſhall tremble at the preſence of the Lord, at the preſence of the God of Jacob: and glory, glory, glory, everlaſting glory, power, rich praiſe, and endleſs life, ſhall ſound through all the tents of Jacob in the wilderneſs, and through all the habitations of Iſrael in the holy land, to the King of glory, power, and life; even to the Lamb that ſits upon the throne, who was, and is, and is to come! who hath reigned, doth reign, and will reign

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on his holy hill of Sion, over all the powers of darkneſs for evermore; *Amen, Hallelujah!*

O ye ſons of men! how long will ye run after vanity, and ſeek to a refuge of lies for ſuccour and ſtability, and ſo loſe your ſhare in the everlaſting riches and glory, which God is preparing for the ſouls of his choſen? Why will ye die? Why will ye periſh? Why will ye undo your ſouls? Why do ye ſo greedily ſow miſery, anguiſh, perplexity, and wrath for your poor ſouls to reap?

O God of love! who knoweſt the value and price of ſouls, pity thy poor creatures, and put a ſtop to this courſe of periſhing, wherein ſo many multitudes are overtaken and paſs down to the pit unawares! O thy bowels, thy bowels, thy wonderful bowels! Let them roll in thee, and work mightily, and in the ſtrength of thy compaſſions bring forth thy judgment and thy mercy among the ſons of men! Build up the tents of Shem; perſuade Japhet to dwell therein; and let Canaan become a ſervant. Preſerve the feet of thy ſaints for ever; ſhut up and ſilence the wicked one in the darkneſs; let not his ſtrength or ſubtilty prevail againſt thee or thine any more: but let the freſh power of thy life, and the virtue of thy incomprehenſible love redeem, fill, poſſeſs, and make glad the heart of thy creation for ever; *Amen, Amen.*

I. P.

Printed 1661.

CONCERNING

PERSECUTION:

WHICH IS,

The Afflicting or Puniſhing that which is Good, under the Pretence of its being Evil.

Which Practice is contrary to the very Nature of Mankind, (ſo far as it is drawn out of the Corruption and Depravation) which would BE GOOD, and DO GOOD, and have Good CHERISHED, and Evil SUPPRESSED, both in itſelf and others.

It is contrary alſo to all Equal and Righteous Government, which is for the SUPPRESSING OF EVIL, and CHERISHING OF GOOD; and not for the Afflicting and Cruſhing of that which is GOOD, upon Pretence of its being EVIL.

Yet this unhappy Error will always be committed in Nations and Governments, until the proper Right and juſt Liberty of Mens Conſciences be diſcerned, acknowledged, and allowed.

LIKEWISE

There are ſome ANSWERS given to that COMMON OBJECTION, againſt affording CONSCIENCE its due Liberty; becauſe Evil Perſons may pretend CONSCIENCE to Eſcape the juſt Puniſhment of their Evil Deeds.

With a Brief ACCOUNT of

That ſuppoſed STUBBORNNESS, which by many is objected againſt the People called QUAKERS.

Given forth in Love to this Nation, that at length the true Bottom and Foundation of a LASTING PEACE and SETTLEMENT may be eſpied; the Spirits of the GOVERNORS and PEOPLE fixed thereon; and that dangerous Rock of PERSECUTION (whereon both the Powers and People of this Nation have ſo often ſplit) carefully avoided by all.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

M DC LXI.

THE PREFACE.

THERE hath been an enmity in the ſeed of the ſerpent againſt the ſeed of the woman, from the time of the promiſe even until now. God, in mercy to mankind, hath given unto him ſince the fall, a ſeed or principle of life; in the light and ſtrength whereof he is to war againſt and ſubdue the corrupt principle, and ſo be freed from the curſe, and become heir of the bleſſing. Againſt this principle all the powers of darkneſs fight (even in every particular man and woman) until they be overcome and ſubjected there: and againſt thoſe in whom this pure principle reigns, all the powers of darkneſs in the world fight alſo, ſtriving to make it miſerable, and to bring it into death and captivity, that they might keep up the content and happineſs of the corrupt ſtate. All the nations of the earth have always warred againſt the principle of God and the people of his choice. In the time of the law, the Jews were the object of the envy and hatred of all the world; in the times of the goſpel, the Jews in ſpirit were hated and hunted, in that day and hour, not only by Heathens, but alſo by ſuch as were Jews according to the letter; and ever ſince the apoſtaſy, by Chriſtians alſo according to the letter; who are as great enemies to the Spirit and power as ever the Jews were.

Now all the miſery of the world, as it at firſt came by departing from the principle of life, ſo it hath been ever ſince continued by mens joining with the princi-

principle of death and corruption, to oppoſe and withſtand the workings of the principle of life, both in themſelves and others. What man is there that hath not in him a witneſs againſt that which is evil? But where is that man who joins with this witneſs in him againſt the evil, and not with the evil againſt this witneſs? Oh! how doth God's witneſs reprove for ſin, making the heart (which is not ſenſual and brutiſh, but ſeriouſly conſiders its latter end) ſad becauſe of it! This is God's way of making the creature weary thereof, of weaning him from it, delivering him out of it, and ſo reſcuing him from the wrath and everlaſting burnings, which are the portion and inheritance of the wicked. But who is it that doth not ſtrive to ſtop, ſilence, and ſuppreſs the witneſs in himſelf, that he might enjoy his luſts, eaſe, and content in the fleſh, by keeping the ſight and remembrance of the evil day far from him? And if he can do ſo, then he rejoiceth, and maketh merry over the teſtimony of the witneſs in himſelf; and when he hath ſo far prevailed, then he is in a good capacity to perſecute others, who hear and obey the voice and teſtimony thereof in themſelves.

That which is to redeem the world out of miſery is the power of the goſpel; and precious is the peace which comes thereby, after the work of the ſpiritual ſword (with the trouble thereof) is finiſhed. Oh! how bleſſed would the principle and power of life make the world, might it but have its free courſe therein! Oh! how happy is that man who bears the condemnation becauſe of ſin, follows the guidance of the living God, and waits for the day of his ſalvation! Oh! the ſweet inward peace of ſpirit which is enjoyed after the ſtorm, and after the judgment of that which is to be judged and deſtroyed! And that which makes one perſon happy, the ſame muſt make nations happy. There is no true ſettlement, nor abiding ſecurity, but in the ſettled and abiding principle. God is ariſen to ſhake the earth, and it can ſettle no more upon the old foundations: yea, the ſame God hath ſhrivelled

up

up the old heavens, and they can no more be ſtretched forth again. " Behold, I make all things new," ſaith the Lord, in the days of the goſpel, when he ſtretcheth forth the arm of his power: and who is he which ſhall venture to eſtabliſh the old heavens and the old earth, which the Lord God is removing, and cauſing to paſs away, and aboliſh the new heavens and the new earth, which the Lord God hath created and formed, and is eſtabliſhing? Oh! that men knew the place of wiſdom, that they might be wiſe, and not fight againſt their Creator, from whom their ſtrength comes, and againſt whom their ſtrength cannot prevail! Oh! that men could ſee how induſtrious they are to keep up miſery, and to keep out happineſs! The eye of man (in the fallen and corrupt eſtate) cannot ſee aright; and miſ-ſeeing, how can he chuſe but miſ-aim, and miſ-act? And miſ-aiming, and miſ-acting, how can he attain his end? But the Lord's counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will fulfill all his pleaſure in every heart, throughout the earth. Happy is he who is weaned from himſelf, and begotten in the light of life, which is incorruptible; he ſhall ſtand and be bleſſed, when all fleſh falls before the breath of the Lord, and becomes miſerable; and the fall of all the fleſhly will, wiſdom, and ſtrength haſtens apace; happy is he who is delivered from them before the day of their ruin! which is nearer than man is aware of, or can believe.

I. P.

CON-

CONCERNING

PERSECUTION.

BECAUSE men generally, in perſecuting, know not what they do, (neither whom it is they perſecute, nor how they ſin againſt God therein, nor what danger they are expoſing themſelves to, and what miſery they are drawing upon themſelves thereby, both in this world and for ever) even as Chriſt ſaid concerning the Jews, who were perſecuting him even to death, "Father, forgive them; for they "know not what they do:" and afterward to Saul; "Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?" Therefore, in love to thoſe who are at unawares running into this great error, that they may find the good hand of God ſtopping them therein for their own good, are theſe things following concerning perſecution written, wherein are manifeſted,

1. *What it is that is perſecuted.*
2. *Who it is that perſecutes, or is the perſecutor.*
3. *The nature of perſecution.*
4. *The grounds or cauſes of perſecution.*
5. *The ways and means of perſecution.*
6. *The ends of perſecuting*; what men aim at therein, or rather what the ſpirit in men, which puts them upon perſecuting of others, aims at thereby.

7. *The*

7. *The colour, or falſe pretence, of the perſecuting ſpirit.*
8. *The bleſſedneſs of the perſecuted.*
9. *The miſery of the perſecutors.*
10. *The way and means whereby men may come to avoid this great evil of perſecuting others.*

Whereunto, in the laſt place, are added, *Some ſad effects of perſecution*; to kindle in men a deſire of avoiding ſo great an evil in itſelf, and ſo pernicious an enemy to all that is good in general, and particularly to the peace and welfare of mankind, as the perſecuting ſpirit is.

1. *What or who it is that is perſecuted.*

The perſecuted in all ages is that "which is born "after God's Spirit," Gal. iv. 29. He that is new-created in Chriſt Jeſus, who is formed in the image and by the Spirit of God, (which is contrary to the image and ſpirit of the world) and who follows Chriſt in the leadings and teachings of his Spirit, (which is out of, and contrary to, the courſe, faſhions, ways, and cuſtoms of the world) this is the man that is perſecuted in all ages. He that is of another ſpirit and principle than the world, and ſo cannot be as the world is, (being made otherwiſe by God) nor walk as the world walks, nor worſhip as the world worſhips, being taught and required of God to do otherwiſe; this is the man who is afflicted, reproached, hated, hunted, perſecuted. And ſo the apoſtle lays it down not only as a thing to be in his age, but in after-ages alſo, 2 Tim. iii. 12. "Yea, and all that will live "godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution." Men may talk of Chriſt, profeſs Chriſt, worſhip Chriſt according to the way that is ſet up in nations, and avoid perſecution; but come under the new principle, come into his life, live godly in him, become really ſubject unto the power and direction of his Spirit, then there is no longer avoiding of perſecution. That which comes

comes into the life of Chriſt, comes preſently into a proportion of ſuffering from that which is contrary to his life.

2. *What or who it is that perſecuteth, or is the perſecutor.*

The perſecutor, in all ages, is that which is after the fleſh. That ſpirit and principle in man which is from beneath, puts the men in whom it is, upon perſecuting the other principle, and the perſons in whom it appears. Or more plainly thus: that which is of the world, that which loves the world, and preſent ſtate thereof; that which lies in the darkneſs, is in unity with it, loveth it, and the corrupt ways thereof; that hates the light, and perſecuteth the children of the light, who are witneſſes againſt, and reprovers of the darkneſs, John iii. 20. "He that was born after "the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the "Spirit." So it was formerly, ſo it is alſo now, ſaith the apoſtle, Gal. iv. 29. Now there are ſeveral ſorts and ranks of theſe; as ſome in the way of open profaneneſs and wickedneſs, ſome more civilized, and of a more gentle, noble, and conſiderate ſpirit and temper, ſome more religious and devout in worſhips (though not rightly principled and guided, but turned aſide to ſome inventions or other of the earthly ſpirit, all which are pleaſing to the earthly ſpirit) but all theſe, though they are different one from another, and agree not well among themſelves, but are full of diſlikes one toward another; yet they all agree in this; to wit, in a willingneſs to have that perſecuted and ſubjected which is of a contrary ſpirit and nature to them all. They are all againſt this more or leſs; though not all againſt it in the ſame degree of heat and vehemency.

3. *The*

3. *The nature of perſecution, or what it is to perſecute.*

Perſecution is the oppoſition of the fleſh againſt the Spirit. The fretting or daſhing of the earthly ſpirit, or ſpirit of man corrupted, againſt that which is born of God: the fighting of the unregenerate and unrenewed ſpirit in man, againſt the ſpirit of man renewed by the regenerating power of the Spirit of God: the fighting, the oppoſing of this ſpirit againſt the other, is perſecution. Whatever any man does in his own will, according to his own wiſdom, and after the inclination of his own heart, againſt another who deſires to fear the Lord, (who waits on him for the counſel and guidance of his Spirit, that he might obey and worſhip him aright) is perſecution. The principle of God teaches to fear the Lord; not according to the fear which is taught by the precepts of men, but according to the fear which God puts into the heart. It teaches likewiſe to worſhip the Lord, not according as man invents and thinks good to preſcribe, but as the Lord inſtructs and requires. It teaches likewiſe not to conform to the world, but to deny it, and come out of it. Now the hating, oppoſing, and puniſhing of that which is thus taught, becauſe of theſe teachings, and its obedience thereto, this is perſecution. The riſing of the heart againſt ſuch, is perſecution in the heart. The reproaching, ſcoffing at, or ſpeaking evil of ſuch, is perſecution with the tongue. (So Iſhmael's mocking of Iſaac, Gen. xxi. 9, 10. is called perſecuting of him, Gal. iv. 29, 30.) The ſmiting, fining, impriſoning of ſuch, &c. in relation to any thing that they do from this principle, is perſecution with the hand, or lifting up of the power, either of a particular perſon, or of a magiſtrate, againſt ſuch.

4. *The grounds of perſecution, or what are the things that cauſe the one ſpirit and principle to perſecute, and the other to be perſecuted.*

The grounds and cauſes which expoſe the one to perſecution, and kindle the heat of perſecuting in the other, are chiefly theſe three enſuing.

1. The enmity of the birth of the fleſh againſt the birth of the Spirit. There is enmity in the ſerpent againſt the woman, and in the ſeed of the ſerpent againſt the ſeed of the woman. That which is born of the corrupt principle cannot endure that which is born of the pure principle. That which walks and worſhips in the will, and according to the inventions of man's wiſdom, and in ſhadows and fleſhly forms, pleaſing to the fleſh, cannot endure that which worſhips in Spirit and truth.

2. The contrariety of that which is born of God, and drawn out of the world, to that which is of the fleſh (or of corrupt man) and left in the world, this is that which increaſeth and draweth forth the enmity in the corrupt principle. "They are not of the "world, even as I am not of the world," John xvii. 16. "therefore the world hateth them," ver. 14. They are of another Spirit, of another image, of another make, of another heart, of another deſire, of another manner of carriage and demeanour, of another principle, and have other ends in all they do, than the world. And their whole courſe and converſation being in the light, and in the love, and in true purity of mind, reproves the world, which lies in the darkneſs, and in the enmity, and walks in the wickedneſs. And how can the world bear this, in the midſt of all their height, glory, and greatneſs, to be continually reproved by a poor and contemptible generation, as God's choice in the world have, for the generality of them, always been; even looked upon by the world as the off-ſcouring thereof, as not fit to be ſuffered to have

have a being in it, but rather as deſerving to be ſcoured off from it?

The light, whereof the children of light are born, and which they hold forth, (or rather which God holds forth by them) condemns the world. The evenneſs, ſweetneſs, and ſtraitneſs of their converſation and practices, condemns the unevenneſs, crookedneſs, and perverſeneſs of the ſpirit of the world. The integrity, ſeriouſneſs, and ſpirituality of their worſhip, (with the living preſence and power of God appearing among them) condemns the deadneſs, formality, and hypocriſy of the worſhips of the world; who draw nigh to God with their lips, when it is manifeſt that their hearts are far from him, being enſnared and captivated with vanities and ſelf-intereſts, and love of the world and earthly things. Indeed the whole courſe and manifeſtation of the light and power of God in them is a continual upbraiding of the principle and ways of darkneſs in the men of the world. And how can the men of the world forbear making an unrighteous war, even a war of perſecution, againſt that which invades their territories, and makes war with them in righteouſneſs? Can darkneſs chooſe but fight to ſave its own dominions? It muſt put out the light, or it cannot ſave its own, but will be loſing of ground daily.

3. Becauſe of the children of light leaving and coming out of the world. They were once of the world, as well as others; of the ſame nature, of the ſame ſpirit, of the ſame corrupt will, of the ſame corrupt wiſdom, walking in their way, worſhipping according to their worſhips, approving and obſerving their cuſtoms, faſhions, and vanities; but when the Spirit of Chriſt called them out of the world, and created in them that which could hear his voice, and was willing to follow him, then they left all theſe, and ſtood witneſſes (in God's Spirit which called, and in that life which was begotten in them, and in the fear, love, and power of that God who quickened them) againſt all theſe. And this mads the world, in that they were once of them, but left them. Had they

ſtaid in the world, and been ſtill of the world, the world would have loved them, as it doth the reſt of its own; but departing from the world, travelling towards another country, ſubjecting themſelves to another Spirit, and teſtifying againſt that ſpirit which formerly led them, and ſtill leads the world, and againſt thoſe ways and practices wherein they formerly walked, and wherein the world ſtill walks, this fills the worldly ſpirit with rage againſt them.

5. *The ways and means of perſecution.*

The ways and means of perſecution are very many. Who can want inſtruments to afflict the innocent and helpleſs, who can neither reſiſt the evil which is offered them, nor harm that which offers it? I ſhall only mention here three general heads, to which many particulars may be referred.

1. One great way of perſecution is, by making uſe of laws already made, either according to their proper tendency to that end and purpoſe, or by bending them aſide from their proper intent, to reach thoſe whom they have a mind to afflict and perſecute. Thus the Jews, when they had a mind to have Chriſt put to death, told Pilate, "We have a law, and by our "law he ought to die," John xix. 7.

2. Another way is, by making new laws fit for their purpoſe, whereby they may catch, enſnare, and ſuppreſs that which is contrary to their ſpirit and principle, and which will not bow thereto. This is a certain way to take that which is born of God, and which cannot but be true to him, and ſo cannot bow to the corrupt will of man, nor to any law made in the corrupt will, to ſtrengthen the corruption, and againſt the holy pure will and mind of God. Thus Daniel and the Three Children were caught in the ſnare by laws; Daniel, for praying to his God, againſt the royal ſtatute and firm decree of the king, ſigned in writing according to the deſire and advice of all the preſidents

preſidents of the kingdom, the governors, princes, counſellors, and captains, Dan. vi. 7, 8. and the Three Children, for not worſhipping the image Nebuchadnezzar had ſet up, according to the decree of the king. (Obſerve this by the way, and conſider it well: what hath been ſet up all this night of the apoſtaſy, but images of the true worſhip; and what compelling hath there been thereto?) Thus have articles been framed, and ſtatutes made, here in England, (as in king Henry the VIIIth and queen Mary's days) which have been great engines of perſecution; and thus have there been ſome late laws made in New-England to the ſame effect, though better might have juſtly been expected from them. And this is not only a certain way, but a very plauſible way likewiſe, whereby the perſecutor hides himſelf from the imputation of perſecution, and appears as a juſt executer of the law; and ſo repreſents him who is upright before God, and innocent in the ſight of God, as an offender and breaker of the law, and ſo juſtly puniſhable. But this will not always cover the unjuſt ſpirit's perſecuting of the juſt. He that ſhall perſecute the Lord of glory (as he that perſecuteth the leaſt member of his, how contemptible ſoever he appears to his eye, doth no leſs, Acts ix. 4. Mat. xxv. 40, 45.) when Chriſt ſhall call him to account therefore, it will be a vain plea for him to ſay, there was a law for it, and he acted according to law. It is fit for all men and laws to bow before the Lord, and not to diſturb any in their obedience to the Lord, or hurt the principle of his life in any; but cheriſh and nurſe it up as much as in them lies, in that tenderneſs which Chriſt begetteth in it, and in that ſpiritual liberty which Chriſt allows it.

3. A third way of perſecution is by the hand of violence, without either law, or ſo much as pretence to law. Thus the perſecuting ſpirit, when it hath power in its hand, and is out of fear, ſmiteth (with the open fiſt of wickedneſs) that which is an enemy to, and ſtands a witneſs againſt, its wickedneſs.

6. *The ends of perſecution, or what the perſecuting ſpirit aims at in its perſecuting, and would fain attain thereby.*

1. The main end of perſecution is to bring the children of light (who have left the evil, darkneſs, and corruption of the world) back to the world again. That which they perſecute them for is, for leaving the world, both in its principles and practices, and for profeſſing obedience and ſubjection to another Spirit; that which they drive at in perſecuting them is, to force them back from under ſubjection to that Spirit which hath led them out of the world, into ſubjection to the ſpirit of the world again. There is a great fight between the Spirit of God and the ſpirit of the world in the two ſeeds; the Spirit of God ſtriving to bring the ſpirit of the world under, and the ſpirit of the world ſtriving to bring the Spirit of God under. This is well known in the heart where the new-birth is witneſſed. Oh! what ſtriving there is by the powers of darkneſs, with all manner of ſecret temptations and forcible oppoſitions (ſo far as the Lord permits) to bring the heart (which the Lord hath begun to redeem, and in ſome meaſure ſet free from them) under their power again! And the ſame that ſtirs up the darkneſs in the heart againſt the ſeed and birth of light there, the ſame ſtirs up in the darkneſs in other men againſt it alſo. The Lord knows what bitter fights we have had with the enemy in our own hearts, before we could leave our principles, paths, and practices of darkneſs; how hard it hath been to us to deny the world, and come out of it; and yet when the Lord hath conquered and ſubjected the darkneſs in our own hearts in any meaſure, then we meet with a new fight abroad in the world, the ſame principle and power in them fighting againſt us, as did at firſt in ourſelves. And as this was the aim and work of the power of darkneſs in ourſelves, (and ſtill is, ſo far as any of it is left in any of us) to bring us back under

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the darkneſs again, even from the light and leadings of the Spirit, and from ſingle obedience thereto; ſo it is the aim and endeavour of the ſame ſpirit in others. And if they could but bring us back from our God into the world again, they would be at peace with us, as well as with other men, and love and cheriſh us, as they do the reſt of the world.

2. A ſecond end of perſecution in the ſpirit that perſecuteth is, to keep the children of light from gaining further ground. The kingdom of God and his truth is of a growing ſpreading nature. It is like leaven, like ſalt, like the light of the morning; its nature is to leaven, to ſeaſon, to overſpread, and gather mankind from the evil, from the darkneſs, from the corruption, from the death and deſtruction. Now the ſpirit of the world, that ſpirit which ruleth the world, is loth to loſe ground; and therefore hunts and ſeeks to deſtroy the veſſels wherein the light appeareth, and from whom it ſhineth forth, and to make them appear as odious as it may, that it may keep all its own territories and dominions in a perfect deteſtation of them, and diſtance from them. Thus though the people of God have ſtill been an innocent people, and ſimple as to the ſubtilty and deceit of the ſerpent, and weak and fooliſh in compare with the wiſe and ſtrong-ones in the worldly nature and ſpirit; yet they are ſtill repreſented as moſt dangerous, moſt ſubtil, and pernicious, as ſhrewd deceivers, witches, Jeſuits, &c. yea, any thing that is hateful and hated.

3. A third end of perſecution is, to afflict, grieve, vex, diſturb, and torment thoſe, whoſe principles and practices are diſpleaſing to them. There is enmity in the nature and ſpirit of the world, againſt the holy pure Spirit and ſeed of God; and if it cannot overcome and get its will one way, in bringing back; yet it will ſtrive to have its will another way, even in vexing and afflicting. It is the pleaſure of hatred or enmity to do any thing which may hurt that againſt which its hatred is. Thus the evil ſpirit *rejoiceth in iniquity*, in grieving and afflicting that which is good.

As the Spirit of love delights in love, and in doing good even to thoſe which perſecute; ſo the ſpirit of enmity delights in hatred and doing evil; even in vexing and oppreſſing thoſe which ſeek their good, becauſe they are not, nor cannot be one with them in their dark principles and evil practices.

7. *The colour or pretence which men put upon their perſecutions of that which is good.*

Perſecution is ſo hateful (and hath ſuch a blackneſs of ſpirit in it) that it cannot endure to appear in its own colour. Where is the man that would appear to perſecute that which is good in men, or men becauſe of their goodneſs? Therefore all perſecutors, though they ſtill perſecute that which is good, and thoſe which are good; yet they ſtill repreſent and charge them as evil, that they might thereby hide the badneſs and unjuſtneſs of their perſecutions from their own eyes, and from the eyes of others. Thus the true prophets of the Lord were always miſrepreſented by their perſecutors, even as falſe prophets, as "troublers of "Iſrael," as madmen, as men not fit to be tolerated in the kingdom or commonwealth of Iſrael. See Jer. xxix. 26, 27. And thoſe which condemned their forefathers for perſecuting the true prophets in former days, yet could alſo perſecute the true prophets in their own days. When Chriſt himſelf aſked the Jews for which of his good works they ſtoned him? they ſaid, "Not for a good work," or *as a good man*; but *for his doing evil*; for his *blaſphemy*; in that he, *being a man, would make himſelf God*, John x. 32, 33. And the Phariſees did not repreſent him as a good man, as an holy teacher from God, (as indeed he was, though his doctrine and converſation differed very much from theirs) but as a deceiver, a ſeducer of the people, a mean man, the ſon of Joſeph the carpenter, one whom none of the wiſe ſcribes owned, but only ſuch ſilly people as knew not the law, John vii. 49. yea,

as

as a very bad man, as one that was againſt the worſhip and ordinances of Moſes, againſt God's temple and prieſts in his doctrine and principles, and a profaner of God's holy ſabbath in his practices; yea, more than this, they repreſented him as a man that had a devil, and that he was able to do ſuch great things beyond them through Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Could the Jews think they did otherwiſe than well in deſiring ſuch a man as this to be put to death? Might they not well prefer Barabbas before a man thus repreſented by their chief prieſts and teachers, who knew and could expound the law, and were beſt able to judge (as they might well think) both what was the truth, and who were deceivers?

8. *The bleſſedneſs of the perſecuted.*

The diſciple of Chriſt, who is perſecuted for conſcience-ſake, who ſuffers from men and their laws for the uprightneſs of his heart towards, and for his obedience unto, Chriſt, that man is precious in the eye of Chriſt, and hath his bleſſing with him; yea, the more men diſeſteem and hate him upon this account, the greater is his bleſſedneſs. "Bleſſed are ye when men "ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all "manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake. Re-"joice, and be exceeding glad," Mat. v. 11, 12. He is bleſſed in ſeveral reſpects.

1. That man is in that Spirit, and in that way, which God hath choſen, and ſo he is in a happy ſtate and condition at preſent. He is in the path of life, in the way of peace, under the leadings of God's Spirit. The world loveth and cheriſheth that which is its own, and walketh with it; but is at enmity and war with that which is of God. Therefore the world's diſlike, enmity, and perſecution is an evidence of God's choice, and of a removal from it towards God. It is an happy thing in the eye of man to be at unity with the world, to have the love and friendſhip there-

of, to have all men ſpeak well of one, to be found doing that which is pleaſing in the eye of the world, and to be enjoying the pleaſures and profits thereof; but in the eye of God it is happy to be in unity with that which is contrary to the world, and procureth its ill-will. "Love not the world, neither the things "that are in the world. If any man love the world, "the love of the Father (which begetteth out of the "world) is not in him." But he that loſeth the love of the world (for the principle of God, and his ſubjection thereto) is in that which the Father loveth, and feeleth the love of the Father opened in him, and revealed to him; and this is truly an happy ſtate.

2. The recompence which God will give to them in the world to come, who cleave to him and his truth, for all the perſecutions which they endure in this world for his truth's ſake, is exceeding great. "Great is "your reward in heaven," Mat. v. 14. "Our light "affliction, which is but for a moment, (but at moſt "for the time of this world) worketh for us a far "more exceeding eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17.

3. The reward is great in this world alſo. There is an hundredfold recompence to be reaped in this life. The peace of God in the conſcience, the preſence of God, the life of God, the virtue of God, the glory of the Spirit of God (which accompanieth, reſteth with, and abideth on, the heart which is faithful, and waiteth upon God for patience, meekneſs, innocency, and ſtrength to carry through ſufferings) may well be valued at above an hundredfold income and recompence for all the hardſhips and tribulations which are undergone for his name's ſake. "If ye be "reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye; "for the Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon "you," 1 Pet. iv. 14.

9. *The*

9. *The grievous misery of the persecutors.*

It is a miserable thing to be deceived about that which is good; to put good for evil, light for darkness, sweet for bitter, and so (under a mistake at least) become a persecutor of the good. All good is of God, and he that is against good is against God; and it is a dreadful thing for the creature to set himself in battle against his Creator, and to engage the power and wrath of the Omnipotent One against him; though while the eye is shut, it doth not appear to men either that they are against God, or that their danger is so great thereby as indeed it is. The children of God are as the apple of his eye. Who can touch them, and he not be deeply sensible? Yea, and they are most dear to God in that for which the world most persecutes them; and therefore their danger and misery must needs be great; which may further appear in these three respects:

1. In respect of the weight of wrath which their persecutions of others here will bring upon themselves in the world to come: then every hard word, with every thing they have done against any lamb of Christ's, shall come upon them. There is a time of judgment for all that is sowed in this world, and then every one shall reap what he hath sowed. And if he that hath not visited the sick and imprisoned for Christ's sake, shall hear that sentence, "Go, ye cursed," &c. what will his portion be who hath imprisoned them, and caused their sickness? Now is our time of trouble; but the Lord hath prepared a day of rest for that spirit which is troubled in this world by the spirit of this world; and then shall the troublesome spirit, which troubled the peaceable spirit, (and would give it no rest in its following and obeying the Lord) be troubled by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. And what shall the misery of that spirit be, whom the Spirit of the Lord troubleth and filleth with anguish and torments, in his fire, and with his brimstone!

brimſtone! Oh! that men would awaken, and conſider in time, and not ſell away their everlaſting inheritance for a meſs of vanity, and tranſitory luſts and pleaſures.

2. The hand of God doth often overtake them in this world, and the Lord doth many times curſe their very bleſſings to them, inſomuch as they cannot enjoy the world with that ſweetneſs and content they might, were it not for the rage and bitterneſs of their ſpirits againſt God's people, and their provoking of God againſt him thereby. How many of his own people did Pharoah loſe, and how did he break the ſtrength and glory of his kingdom, by perſecuting God's Iſrael of old? How did Amalek cauſe his name to be rooted out from under heaven? How did the nations and mighty powers of the earth fall upon this account, one after another? And in this nation how many powers have already fallen thereby? *Jeruſalem is a burdenſome ſtone*, (it was ſo in the type, it is much more ſo in the ſubſtance) which lies in the way of every earthly ſpirit and power; which they know not how to build with, neither can they rear up their own building becauſe of it, and therefore every power ſtrives to remove it out of their way; but they know not the weight of it, nor who it is that hath ſquared it, and how firm it is fixed upon the rock. The earthly ſpirit is never to enjoy any true or laſting peace and ſettlement (which is the gift of God) until it leave off perſecuting God's Iſrael, (which are the people whom God calleth out of the world) and leave them free for God to enjoy, command, and diſpoſe of; and whatever holds Iſrael in bondage, either within or without, muſt either be ſubject to the Lord, or be broken by that arm of power which the Lord putteth forth to redeem Iſrael with.

3. By all their perſecutions and afflictions they ſhall but increaſe and cauſe to grow that which they ſtrive to ſuppreſs. This is miſery indeed for a man to hazard his ſoul eternally, and his peace and proſperity in this world, to cruſh and ſuppreſs a people, and yet not

not be able to effect that neither, but even thereby occasion their growth and increase; and yet so it is in the day that God putteth forth his hand to redeem Israel. The ways that man takes to bring them back into captivity shall be the means of perfecting their redemption. "Come (said Pharoah) this people "multiply too fast; they grow more and mightier "than we; let us deal wisely with them, and keep "them down by hard labour, lest they grow over-"numerous, and join with our enemies against us, "when they see their advantage." But they grew and spread the more, upon his wise plotting and contriving to diminish them. And what did he get by striving to keep them from going forth of his land and idolatrous worships to worship the Lord aright, but plagues and judgments upon himself and his people from the Lord? Can the powers of the earth withstand God any more now than they could formerly? Shall he not redeem and bring forth his people from the land of Babylon? His spiritual Israel from the spiritual Egypt? Shall he not break the antichristian yoke from their consciences, that they may be free in spirit to serve the Lord? Can any hinder God from breathing his Spirit upon people, and from begetting them in the image and likeness of his Spirit unto himself? And shall not these be the Lord's? Shall not the same Spirit teach them to worship the Lord? Shall God call them to worship him openly, and shall they not obey him, but worship him according to man's inventions and commandments, or not at all publickly? O ye sons of men! be wise; do not contend with the Lord; be not bewitched by the cup of fornications from the pure spiritual worship of the living God into man's inventions, which the Lord's soul loaths; nor do not strive to hold any back from the Lord, whom the Lord draws after him; but consider his power, wait to know his work in the world, and do not intrench upon his dominions, but be thankful for and content with your own; and do not provoke him against you, who can more easily take yours from you

you than ye can his from him. And consider this watch-word, in that which can open and shew the truth of it; *the Lord hath put forth his arm to recover his possessions from out of the hands of antichrist*; and who shall be able to force it back again, to make it return into his bosom, without effecting what he stretched it forth for?

Therefore, O magistrates of this nation! do not make use of the sword to suppress the plants of God; but to cut down that which manifestly is not of God. Look abroad throughout this nation; behold how much evil there is to grieve and provoke the Lord, and to divert good from the nation, and to bring wrath upon it, and the government thereof; strike at that in righteous and true judgment, and with mercy to creatures souls and bodies. But that which certainly is of God, meddle not with; and that which may be of God for aught ye know, be circumspect in meddling with, lest ye engage God against you. It were better to let many tares grow, than pluck up one ear of corn. Christ hath absolutely expressed it to be his mind, that he would not have that done which may so much as hazard the plucking up of an ear of corn, Mat. xiii. 29. But oh! how are the laws and governments of this world to be lamented over! And oh! what need there is of their reformation, whose common work it is to pluck up the ears of corn, and leave the tares standing! The chief cause of this misery (from whence it principally ariseth) is mens meddling with those things which God has reserved for himself, and assaying to do that carnally which God did spiritually, and will do spiritually again, in his due time, when he hath sufficiently shewn how untoward and improper man's hand is to effect it. The Christians in the apostles days were "of one heart, "and one mind," which proceeded from the power and work of God upon them; and then they soon came into one way and worship; but men will have unity and uniformity in a way of religion and worship before there is one heart and one mind. Now this is

contrary

contrary to the Spirit of God, and to the very nature of religion, and the cauſe of much cruelty upon mens conſciences: and this hath been and will be the conſtant effect of it, even the cruſhing (as much as lies in man) of that which is tender, and of and for God, and the increaſing of that which is formal, dead, and earthly. Now if ever Chriſt appointed or intended ſuch a church-government, which naturally produceth this effect, let all that fear God, and are of ſober ſpirits, judge.

10. *The way and means to avoid perſecution.*

Where is the man (in whom there is any good, who hath any love to goodneſs and righteouſneſs, who hateth cruelty and oppreſſion over mens outward liberties and eſtates, and much more over the conſciences of people) that could not with his heart deſire to have this grand enemy removed, both from particular perſons, and alſo from governors, and governments, that peace and ſettlement might be known; righteouſneſs reaped; all cruelty and hardneſs in one man towards another removed; and there be *no more complaining in our ſtreets*; either becauſe of *oppreſſions from men*, or fear of *wrath from God*, upon thoſe governments which oppreſs? And who would not earneſtly pray to God for the diſcovery of that way and thoſe means, and be very induſtrious in the uſe of them, whereby this perſecuting ſpirit and temper might be waſted and dried up in him? Now the way and means whereby the perſecuting ſpirit may be ſubdued, are divers; As,

1. *By a true awe and fear of God in the heart.* The fear of God teacheth to depart from iniquity, and to ſeek the crucifying and bringing under of the worldly ſpirit in a man's ſelf, and to wait daily to have God's will revealed, and likewiſe to be made obedient thereunto. Now he that is in this temper of ſpirit, will hardly be drawn to perſecute another, but rather rejoice

joice to ſee a tenderneſs of ſpirit in him, and true ſubjection of heart to what he believes to be the mind and will of God; and dares not ſo much as judge him for differing, either in apprehenſions or practices, about worſhip, much leſs perſecute him therefore. But that man who is of a profane ſpirit, or comes eaſily by his religion, (even by the wiſdom, induſtry, and parts of man, and not by the gift of God) and is exerciſed in that fear of God which is taught by the precepts of men, but knoweth not that fear which God puts in the heart, (from whence the true religion and worſhip ſprings) either of theſe may be drawn to perſecute; yea, indeed, it will be hard for either of them to abſtain therefrom.

2. *By meekneſs of ſpirit.* The goſpel makes meek, tender, gentle, peaceable; fills with love and ſweetneſs of ſpirit; teaches to love, to forgive, to pray for and bleſs enemies: and how ſhall this man perſecute? Can a lamb perſecute? Can a dove perſecute? Indeed a wolf in ſheep's clothing may raven and devour, but a true ſheep cannot. As the power of the goſpel is known, the devouring and perſecuting nature is deſtroyed; and that being taken away, perſecution ſoon comes to an end.

3. *By a ſober and patient conſideration of their cauſe whom they perſecute, and what it is in themſelves which moves them to perſecute them.* The ſtrength of perſecution lies in the darkneſs, in the dark thoughts, miſjudgings, and miſapprehenſions about him whom one perſecutes, or is inclined to perſecute; in prejudices and falſe judgments of perſons and things received; which, by a ſober hearing and conſidering of things in God's fear and in meekneſs, might be removed; and then the eager perſecuting heat of ſpirit would ſoon abate and fall, the fewel (which kindled it) being taken away. "The Jews ſtopped their ears, and "ran upon Stephen," Acts vii. 57. This is the way of perſecuting ſpirits; they take in prejudices againſt perſons, their principles and practices, ſtop their ears againſt what may be ſaid to manifeſt either the equity

of

of the thing in itſelf, or their miſtake about it, and then run headlong in their fury of perſecuting and devouring. But he that is ſober and conſiderate, and weighs the cauſe before he engages againſt it, and obſerves what it is in him which moves ſo hotly againſt another, and which is ſo ready to believe ill aforehand; he ſhall ſoon ſee that, which is always hid from the eye of the perſecutor, and find water to caſt on this devouring fire of ſpirit in him.

4. *By a righteous frame of ſpirit, which is willing to do by another, as he would be done to in the like caſe.* Perſecution ariſeth from unrighteouſneſs and ſelfiſhneſs; righteouſneſs and true equity would ſoon end it. If no man would make another man's conſcience bow by force, who would not have his own ſo bowed, perſecution would ſoon ceaſe. But this is the great evil and unrighteouſneſs of man; whoever is uppermoſt, thinks he hath a right to bow all the reſt under him, and looks upon them as guilty and offenders, if their conſciences do not yield and bow under him. And he that newly complained of the load laid on his conſcience by others, yet if he can get eaſe and power into his hand, is preſently laying a load upon others. Here is a wrong frame of ſpirit within, and how can it chooſe but bring forth injury and perſecution outwardly?

5. *By taking heed and watching againſt the corrupt and carnal principle, with the reaſonings, ſelf-ends, and intereſts thereof, and hearkening to the principle of God, which teacheth and ſpeaketh right reaſon.* Man, as he came from God, and was by eſpecial favour formed in his image, ſo it pleaſed God to place in him a principle of his own life to govern him. This image was defaced by the fall, and this principle forfeited, yet for Chriſt's ſake (who is the Saviour of all men, but eſpecially of them that believe) the Lord ſtirreth up and viſiteth all mankind more or leſs, by the pure eternal principle of his own light and life in Chriſt. In hearkening to this, man's reaſon is rectified, purified, and preſerved pure; and his ſteps here are ſafe. But conſulting

conſulting and contriving out of this, he meets with that which corrupts him (captivating and miſbiaſſing his reaſon); and then all his intents, deſigns, and contrivances become corrupt, and tend not only towards the prejudice of others at preſent, but alſo to his own loſs and detriment in the iſſue. He therefore that would be ſafe in the enjoyment of any bleſſing which he hath received from God, and faithful in doing him ſervice in his generation, muſt know what of himſelf is ready to betray him, that he may watch againſt it, and turn from it; and what in himſelf is given him of God to enlighten, guide, inſtruct, and preſerve him, that he may hearken thereto, and be made happy thereby.

11. And laſtly, To ſet it yet more home upon all that are ingenuous, and would be worthy and noble, and do that which is worthy and noble, abhorring cruelty, afflicting and oppreſſing of others; let them conſider *the fruits and effects of perſecution*, which are very many, and of the worſt kind, even ſuitable to the nature of the root. At preſent I ſhall only mention theſe four.

1. In a great degree, *It hindereth the growth of the preſent good, in every age and generation*, ſo far as the earthly power or ſword of the magiſtrate can well hinder. Perſecution of that which is good by the earthly powers, in its proper tendency, is an hindrance to the growth thereof in their age and day; though the Lord can overbear the malignity of it, and further the growth of his ſeed thereby.

2. *It wholly tends towards hindering the ſhooting up of any further ſeeds of good, which God hath to ſow in the earth.* For all the ſeeds of good which God hath to ſow in the earth, at firſt they are looked upon as evil; until by God's bleſſing upon them, and opening of mens eyes through the much ſuffering of thoſe veſſels, in whom God cauſeth the moſt excellent ſeeds of his virtue and goodneſs firſt to appear, their innocency and beauty begin at length to ſhine in mens eyes, and be diſcerned.

3. *It*

3. *It occaſioneth the growth of evil.* For good withſtandeth, oppoſeth, and chaſeth away evil, even as light doth darkneſs; and therefore the preventing of the ſpringing up of the good, is a cheriſhing and ſtrengthening of the evil. Beſides, the ſame ſpirit, government, or power, which perſecuteth and keepeth down the good, under a pretence of its being evil, cannot chooſe but alſo cheriſh and nurſe up the evil, under a pretence of its being good. For the ſame eye, tongue, and heart, that ſeeth, calleth, and acknowledgeth that which is indeed good to be evil, cannot chooſe but alſo miſtake the evil and think it good.

4. *It draweth down the wrath of God upon people, powers, and governments*, where ſuch perſecution is; where evil is cheriſhed under a pretence of its being good, and the good endeavoured to be ſuppreſſed under a pretence of its being evil. If men from their hearts do acknowledge the being of God, and his diſpoſal of things; then ſurely what is truly good in perſons or nations is of him; and what is of him, his eye is upon. He beholdeth the plants which he hath planted in the earth, and the plants which the envious one hath planted; and he cannot bleſs that place, that people, thoſe powers, that government, where his plants are cruſhed, under a pretence of their not being his, and where the evil nature and plants are cheriſhed as if they were the good.

Therefore he that would not be an enemy to God, an enemy to goodneſs, an enemy to himſelf, an enemy to mankind, and a friend and promoter of evil, let him wait on the Lord, for the fear of his name and power to be written on his heart, and for a meek righteous frame of ſpirit, &c. that he may conſider his ſteps, and the reaſonings of his mind, and not miſtake evil for good, and good for evil, and ſo perſecute men for being and doing that, which (might it have its courſe and progreſs) would make the world happy.

Object. *But will not this undermine magiſtracy, and interrupt its puniſhing of evil-doers, if they ſhould be thus tender and conſiderate? For what man cannot pretend*

conſcience for what he does? And if the magiſtrate ſhould hearken to every pretence of conſcience, the laws would ſoon be ſilent, government at a ſtand, and every one do what they liſt, bringing in all manner of licentiouſneſs and diſobedience to authority, under a pretence of conſcience.

Anſ. 1. Conſcience is of God; and tenderneſs and conſcientiouſneſs towards him is neceſſary to the receiving of his pure fear, and towards the ſpringing up and growth of all good in the heart. The ſeed of good is tender; and if it be not received into tender and well-prepared earth (but into thorny, ſtony, or highway ground) it cannot grow. And it cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be the intent of God in appointing governments, that ever their laws or authority ſhould hurt that tenderneſs of conſcience, wherein his ſeeds of good are ſown.

2. It is true; the corrupt nature of man, which is ſelfiſh, and ſeeketh covers for evil, may alſo ſeek this cover to hide iniquity under, and may pretend conſcience, when there is no matter of conſcience at all, but ſelf-will and ſelf-ends at bottom.

3. Notwithſtanding this, God would not have the true conſcientiouſneſs and tenderneſs in any of his cruſhed; nor can it be done by any perſon, authority, or law, without provoking God on the one hand, or without injury to ſuch who are ſo dealt with, viz. who are puniſhed by man for the exerciſe of that conſcientiouſneſs which is of God, and which he requireth, and is pleaſing to him.

4. It were far better in itſelf, ſafer for governors, more agreeable to equity and righteous government, and more pleaſing to God and good men, rather to ſuffer ſome (by their craft and falſe covers) to eſcape due puniſhment, than to puniſh thoſe who (by the goodneſs, innocency, and righteouſneſs which God hath planted in them) are exempted from puniſhment. Yea, it were better and much ſafer to ſpare many evil men, than to puniſh one good man: for mercy and ſparing (even of offenders) is natural to that which is good; but ſeverity and puniſhments are unnatural, and

and but for neceſſity's ſake. And as for that man, who by his ſubtilty and deceit thus eſcapes man's hand, he will be no great gainer; for God, who is above all, will be ſure to meet with him. Yea, that magiſtrate, who ſpares ſome evil and evil-doers, merely upon this account, (leſt he ſhould hurt that which is good) the Lord will help and bleſs; whereas, that power and government which wilfully errs herein, the Lord may ſoon cut down; and that which errs thus through miſtake (it being a grievous miſtake to cut down the good inſtead of the evil) the Lord, who loveth the good and hateth the evil, may eaſily be provoked againſt.

5. As government came from God; ſo the righteous execution of it depends upon God. Every man needs God's help daily, elſe he may eaſily err in his courſe; and governments and governors need God's help much more, in the many intricacies and perplexities which they often meet with. And God is nigh to them in their difficult caſes, who wait upon him for counſel and direction. If the caſe be knotty, yet if God give wiſdom, hath the magiſtrate cauſe to complain? And will not the Lord aſſiſt that magiſtrate, who in his fear waits on him, and is not willing to ſpare the evil, and afraid to hurt the good? If there were not ſo much conſulting with man's wiſdom and policy, (nor ſuch laying of deſigns and intents at firſt, as ſpring from man, and not from God) but a naked upright waiting on him for inſtruction, who can only guide the ſpirit of man aright, governments would not prove ſo difficult, nor the ſucceſs therein ſo dangerous.

A brief Account of that Stiffneſs, Reſolvedneſs, and ſuppoſed Stubbornneſs, which by many is objected againſt the People called QUAKERS.

Object. *THAT the people called Quakers are an innocent and induſtrious people, that they aim at good, and might be ſerviceable and profitable to the nation in many reſpects; this many believe concerning them, and in their hearts wiſh that the powers would let them alone, and make a trial of them; the which they might be the more inclined to do, were it not for a certain ſtiffneſs which appears in them, they being ſo glewed to their principles and practices, that they will not bend in the leaſt, nor ſo much as meet the magiſtrate one jot in any favour he would ſhew unto them. This is ſuch a temper as no magiſtrate or governor can bear, and therefore there is a neceſſity either of baniſhing or ſuppreſſing them one way or other.*

Anſ. I freely confeſs, that (looking upon them with man's eye) it may eaſily appear ſo to man, who cannot ſee either whence that is, or what that is, which is wrought in their hearts by God. And how can I blame others for judging thus of them, when I myſelf ſhould be liable ſo to judge, if I did ſo look upon them? But yet, if I had patience to hear them, and to conſider the thing in the fear of God, (watching againſt that wiſdom, from which the knowledge of the things of God and the ſtate of his people is hid) I ſee alſo, that there is ſome ground may appear unto man, to let him ſee that this is not ſuch a ſtiffneſs and ſtubbornneſs of ſpirit as he judgeth, but ariſeth from, and neceſſarily accompanieth, a true tenderneſs and conſcientiouſ-

conſcientiouſneſs towards God; which to make the more manifeſt to ſuch as are willing fairly to conſider the thing, and know the truth thereof, I ſhall thus demonſtrate.

1. Stubbornneſs, or ſuch a kind of ſtiffneſs and reſolvedneſs, ariſeth from the ſtrength and corruption of the natural will and earthly wiſdom. The wiſdom which is from above is gentle, eaſy to be intreated; and the will which is created by God is mild and flexible, and eaſy to be led (by the leaſt child) in the line of goodneſs. And I can truly ſay this, that I never in my whole courſe and converſation (who have long been a ſpectator and unintereſted perſon, both as relating to the civil ſtate and the various profeſſions of religion, till the power of truth and preſence of God appearing in this people drew my heart after them), yea, I cannot but ſay, in the ſingleneſs of my heart, I never met with a more mild, gentle, flexible-ſpirited people. And he that can reach the ground of the thing, cannot but ſee it to be thus; for he that is daily exerciſed in denying his will and wiſdom; he on whoſe back the Lord lays the croſs, and crucifies him every day, his ſelf-will and ſelf-wiſdom (with all the conceitedneſs and ſtiffneſs which ariſeth therefrom) muſt needs be much broken in him.

2. In the tenderneſs and pliableneſs to good, which God begets, there is, and cannot but be, an unbendedneſs to evil. Conſider this, O ye that are wiſe! In the birth which God begets in the heart; in the immortal ſeed of life, which God hath ſown and cauſeth to ſpring up in his heritage, there is a bowing to God at every appearance of good, accompanied with a tenderneſs, gentleneſs, and good-will to man; but it cannot bow to that which is evil in any man upon the face of the earth. Read then this riddle, with a true underſtanding: the tender one cannot yield, the flexible one cannot bow; but naturally ſtandeth upright and ſtrait towards God, even in every thing it hath learned of him, and which he requireth of it. Thus in the apoſtles days, the Chriſtians, (though meek,

though ſweet, though pliable to the Spirit of God, and to all good, yet) could not bow to ſo much as an appearance of evil any where, but ſhun and avoid it every where. And if it were not for this kind of ſtiffneſs and unbendedneſs, the children of God could never be preſerved in their departure out of the world's ſpirit, ways, worſhips, and practices; but would ſoon be enſnared and drawn back again, by the enticements and ſubtilties of the worldly nature, either in themſelves or others.

3. A ſtiffneſs then I grant, an unbendedneſs I grant; but not of the earthly, not of the ſelf-will, nor according to the earthly; but ſuch as ariſeth from truth in the heart, and from tenderneſs of ſpirit towards God; ſuch as is begot in his fear, preſerved by his power, and is neceſſary towards their preſervation who are born of him, and called by him out of the world. And if thoſe, who are apt and liable to misjudge of them, did but ſee the ſincere deſire of their hearts not to offend man, but to be ſubject to the utmoſt according to the will of God, and knew what breathings there are in their hearts to God, (in relation to the magiſtrate, and when they appear before him) that they may be preſerved in the pure fear, and in righteouſneſs and inoffenſiveneſs, and how they cannot but refuſe to break any of God's commands, becauſe he is their Supreme Lord, and they dare not diſobey him to pleaſe man, or avoid their own ſufferings from man: I ſay, if men did ſee this, ſurely they would not call it ſtubbornneſs and ſelf-willedneſs, but a pure ſubjection and denial of the ſelf-will in God's fear, joined with an holy and humble boldneſs in his power.

4. Let it be equally conſidered, and it will ſoon be acknowledged, That the leaſt thing which God requires (the command being from ſo great a King, upon whom the ſoul hath ſo great dependence, from whom it hath ſo great hopes, and to whom univerſal obedience is ſo due in itſelf, and ſo profitable to the creature) is exceeding weighty; and it is impoſſible for the fear of him, and due tenderneſs towards his commands,

commands, to be preſerved, without a ſtrict and cloſe giving up the will to him, and ſtanding in his ſtrength, ſtrong and unbended againſt all temptations, provocations, allurements, and affrightments to the contrary (and how eaſily may men call this ſtubbornneſs and ſtiffneſs!). But this they receive from God, as well as the law of obedience and power to obey; and this (which men call ſtubbornneſs) flows in upon them from him, when they are in the ſweeteſt and meekeſt frame of ſpirit, moſt ready to deny themſelves, and to yield up their own wills to whatſoever is good and righteous, and ſo of God.

5. The ſame thing which is offended at this unbendedneſs and reſolvedneſs, which is wrought and preſerved in them by the fear of God (calling it, by way of reproach, ſtiffneſs and ſtubbornneſs); I ſay, the very ſame thing will commend that reſolution and ſtiffneſs, which is taken up in man's wiſdom, and held in man's will. Is it not good to weigh and conſider things reaſonably, and then to chooſe and hold faſt thoſe principles which appear moſt reaſonable? What man but will ſay it is? And is it not good to obey and keep to that light which is higher than reaſon; which comprehends reaſon, rectifying and preſerving it, making it profitable and ſerviceable to God which made it, to the veſſel in which it is, and to the reſt of the creation? But "wiſdom is juſtified of her "children." He that knows not the principle of the eternal light, who is not born of it, (much leſs by unfeigned obedience and ſubjection formed into it) he cannot juſtify it in his paths; but he juſtifies the earthly wiſdom and reaſon of man, by its ſetting up *appearances of good*, inſtead of *good*, and would make all acknowledge and bow to them as *good*; whereas that which is indeed acquainted with the *good*, living in the principle thereof, cannot bow to the falſe appearance, but only to the truth itſelf. When man's ſpirit and wiſdom is wearied out of all its paths, and he broken with the miſery which will certainly overtake him therein; at laſt the path of God will be

welcome to him, and that principle which (through the operation of God) is able to rectify him and make him happy.

There hath long been a peace and prosperity throughout the world in unrighteousness; but the season is at length come for the breaking thereof, and now there is not to be such a settled false peace in unrighteousness any longer: but tribulation, anguish, and destruction, is coming upon the selfish and unjust spirit; and he that refuseth the path of righteousness, must not know peace, but be overtaken with the overflowing scourge, and swept into and shut up in the pit, which hath long been digging for the wicked, Psa. xciv. 13.: and mark this thing following, ye that would not find yourselves deceived of your souls hereafter, nor of your outward peace and prosperity here; for it deeply concerns both.

The Spirit of the Lord once raised up a spiritual building, which the spirit of the dragon overturned, (as to its outward state, though the gates of hell could not prevail against the being and inward state of the true church) and instead thereof set up an earthly image, agreeable to the earthly spirit in nations, but burdensome to that which is innocent, pure, and spiritual. The Lord God suffered this to stand all its allotted time, and to have power to keep down the visibility of his truth and people; but the Lord hath appointed a season to raise up his own building again, and to throw down this image. Now this I say to all men, in the fear and dread of the Almighty, stand still and mark, if all the power of man be able to keep down God's spiritual building which he is raising up; or to keep up any part of the earthly image which he is throwing down. The spirit of man (in various ways) hath shewed what it judgeth best to have down, and to have up; and hath put forth its strength to accomplish its will and counsel. Stand still a while, and ye shall see, that the Spirit of the Lord will also shew what he would have down, and what he would have up; and he will also put forth his strength,

ſtrength, to accompliſh his will and counſel. It is the glory and honour of the Lord to carry on his work in the midſt of all the oppoſitions of man, and againſt the full current of his ſtrength and will. This will make it to appear to be of God, and cauſe the glory of his name to ſhine. O! that men could fear the Lord, and bow before him, that he might be honoured in them, and ſee good to honour them in the carrying on of his work, and ſo might not be forced (through their hearkening to the dark ſpirit, and becauſe of their ignorance of, and diſobedience to, the light of his Spirit) to get himſelf a name, by overturning their ſtrength and counſels, and cauſing his glory to ſhine over them.

We have been a poor oppreſſed people, from the day that the power of the Lord brake forth upon us, and his light ſprang in us, even until now: and now we are brought lower than ever, and are in greater danger (to the eye of man) than ever. Yet our confidence is ſtill in our God; and this we are certain of, that our principle (and practices therefrom) ſhall ſtand, and man ſhall not be able to prevail againſt it; for God will preſerve his people in his life and power, and the heads of all that wait upon him in his fear, ſhall be lift up above all the ſwellings of the waters; yea, a ſong of praiſe is already prepared in the heart of God's choſen, againſt the day of his deliverance. We look not out, but give up our backs to the ſmiter, as if their ſtrokes were never to have an end; and yet we wait on our God, and hope in him, as if deliverance were ſpringing up every moment. And, oh! that God would ſmite the ſpirit of enmity and darkneſs in men and powers! And then there would be love, peace, purſuing after God and righteouſneſs, and no more *perſecuting* and *ſmiting* of God's people for the uprightneſs of their hearts, and for their obedience and faithfulneſs to him. But be it known throughout all the earth, we are the Lord's, and we muſt worſhip and ſerve him. He hath redeemed us (even all of us in ſome meaſure, who have known unity with

with his living truth) in ſoul, in body, and ſpirit; and they muſt all be his in the firſt place, and cannot bow to man in the leaſt, againſt his will, or contrary to the law of his pure life, and leadings of his Spirit in the heart. Here is our ſtanding, in the ſtrength of our God, whatever become of us. And here we ſtand in love and good will to mankind; yea, to theſe preſent powers, however they judge of us; and have been praying for them, and mourning over them, while they have been ſmiting of us. And when they have drawn the hand of the Lord upon themſelves, if the Lord ſhall pleaſe to open their eyes to ſee what we have been towards them, (and how fain we would have had them ſet footing there, where they might have ſtood firm and have been preſerved) they will bewail as much their dealings with us, as what will befall themſelves. The Lord will manifeſt all things in his time, and give his truth a paſſage in the earth, and his people a quiet habitation therein, how black ſoever the face of things now appear, as relating to them.

Oh! how happy will the day be, when the Lord ſhall have wrought down the ſelfiſh ſpirit in man, and ſhall have raiſed up his own noble and equal principle. Then ſhall righteouſneſs ſpring up and ſpread abroad throughout the nations; and the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.

SOME

SOME

DIRECTIONS

TO THE

PANTING SOUL,

Which hath been long travelling in the Letter, but hath not yet been acquainted with the Power, nor hardly ſo much as entered into the Miniſtration of the endleſs Life (which is the Miniſtration of the GOSPEL) that it may feel the Spring, and come to drink there of the living Waters.

MAT. xi. 28, 29, 30.

" Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy
" laden, and I will give you reſt. Take my yoke
" upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and
" lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt unto your
" ſouls; for my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is
" light."

SOME ſweet meditations ſprang in my heart concerning this portion of ſcripture; with breathings of ſpirit for, and rollings of bowels towards, thoſe " that labour, and are heavy laden," which I find drawings to communicate.

1. *In*

1. *In the goſpel* (which is "the power of God unto "ſalvation") *is the ſoul's reſt.* It is the doctrine of the kingdom, wherein is life, joy, peace, and everlaſting reſt to the ſoul in God. The law had the ſhadow of the good things to come; but under it was not the poſſeſſion of the good things themſelves, but only a labouring after them, and a mourning and load becauſe of the want of them: but in the goſpel is the ſubſtance, the enjoyment; life and immortality are there brought to light, and an entrance miniſtered into the everlaſting kingdom, where they are felt, poſſeſſed, and enjoyed. "The kingdom of hea-"ven is at hand," ſaith the forerunner: It is come, ſaith the Meſſiah: and in it there is righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the pure Spirit of life.
2. *It is the will of the King of ſaints that his people ſhould enjoy the reſt and peace of his goſpel.* He would not have them always labouring and heavy laden, as under the law; but he would have their ſouls feel and enjoy the eaſe, the liberty, the ſweetneſs, the pure power and eternal reſt of his life. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him to preach glad tidings to the meek, liberty to the captives, life to the dead, the opening of the priſon to the priſoner of hope, the binding-up of the broken-hearted, the pouring in of oil upon the wounded: and he would have the ſouls of his people enjoy that which he came to bring them.
3. *Chriſt hath plainly chalked out the path of his reſt to every weary panting ſoul, which he that walketh in cannot miſs of.* He hath *caſt up, caſt up*; he hath *made the way plain* in the goſpel, ſo plain, that the way-faring man, though a fool, yet keeping to the light of the goſpel, cannot err therein, or miſs of the bleſſed reſt thereof. How is it? Why "come unto me; take my yoke upon "you, and learn of me." He that walketh in this path cannot miſs of it: the reſt is at the end

of

of it, nay, the reſt is in it: "he that believeth "entereth into the reſt." The true faith, the faith which ſtands in the power, and which is given to the birth which is born from above, is the ſubſtance of the reſt hoped for, and there is a true taſte and ſome enjoyment of it given to him that truly believeth.

4. *The reſt was once felt and enjoyed, when the goſpel was known in power.* Believers, in the firſt day of the goſpel, before the night overtook that glorious diſpenſation, found "peace and joy in "believing;" yea, they could rejoice in the Lord always. They felt the power and the life, which ſtood over all the powers of darkneſs, and brought good to them out of every affliction, and out of every temptation, and out of every diſtreſs: ſo that they ſtanding in the life, and in the power which had quickened them, and was preſent with them, they could "count it all joy "when they fell into manifold temptations," knowing the advantage which would accrue to them thereby, and poſſeſſing their ſouls in the pure patience, till God wrought it out for them. *They had an entrance miniſtered to them into the everlaſting kingdom: they received the kingdom which could not be ſhaken, and in it had fellowſhip with the Father, and with the Son, and in the eternal light the blood ran in their veſſels, which cleanſed them, and kept them pure; and they ſat down with Chriſt in the heavenly places, even every one in the particular manſion which God had built in them by his Spirit. The fear of the living God was put in their hearts; the Spirit of the Lord was within them, and there his law was written, and read in the Spirit, and the treaſures of his kingdom were opened by the key of David in the hand of the Spirit, and their ſouls had true ſatisfaction and reſt in meaſure, and were travelling on towards the fulneſs.*

5. *There is no reſt to the ſoul to be enjoyed in the goſpel from under the yoke.* This ſtands eternally: that which

which yokes down that which would be at eaſe and liberty out of the life, that is the ſoul's true reſt; there is no other: and under the yoke it is enjoyed, and not otherwiſe; only when that which is to be yoked down is conſumed and deſtroyed, it is then no longer a yoke, but perfect liberty. But the ſame thing which is the liberty is the yoke: and under the yoke, the ſweetneſs, the eaſe, the lightſomeneſs, the ſafe poſſeſſion of the life is enjoyed. Mark this therefore diligently: the yoke is not one thing, and the liberty another; but one and the ſame. The power of God, the life everlaſting, the pure light, the divine nature, is a yoke to the tranſgreſſing nature; but it is the eaſe, the pleaſure, the reſt, the peace, the joy, the natural center of that which is born of God.

Now to the ſoul that hath felt breathings towards the Lord formerly, and in whom there are yet any true breathings left after his living preſence, and after the feeling of his eternal virtue in the heart, I have this to ſay: *Where art thou? Art thou in thy ſoul's reſt? Doſt thou feel the virtue and power of the goſpel? Doſt thou feel the eaſe which comes from the living arm, to the heart which is joined to it in the light of the goſpel? Is thy labouring for life in a good degree at an end? And doſt thou feel the life and power flowing in upon thee from the free fountain? Is the load really taken off from thy back? Doſt thou find the captive redeemed and ſet free from the power of ſin, and the captivity broken, and he which led thee captive from the life and from the eternal power, now led captive by the life, and by the redeeming power, which is eternal? Haſt thou found this, or haſt thou miſſed of it? Let thine heart anſwer.* Ah! do not imagine and talk away the reſt and ſalvation of thy ſoul. The goſpel-ſtate is a ſtate of ſubſtance, a ſtate of enjoying the life, a ſtate of feeling the preſence and power of the Lord in his pure Holy Spirit, a ſtate of binding-up, a ſtate of healing, a ſtate of knowing the Lord, and walking

ing with him in the light of his own Spirit. It begins in a ſweet powerful touch of life, and there is a growth in the life (in the power, in the divine virtue, in the reſt, peace, and ſatisfaction of the ſoul in God) to be adminiſtered and waited for daily. Now art thou here, in the living power, in the divine life, joined to the ſpring of life, drawing water of life out of the well of life with joy? Or art thou dry, dead, barren, ſapleſs, or at beſt but unſatisfiedly mourning after what thou wanteſt?

Well, ye that are dry, dead, barren, as it were without the living God, (that know not the ſhining of his ſun, nor the deſcending of his dews from on high on his tender plants, nor the care, diligence, and circumſpection of the huſbandman over his huſbandry) oh! wait for the quickening virtue, for the viſitations of the day-ſpring from on high! that ye may be quickened again to God, that ye may find his life viſiting you, his Spirit breathing upon you, that the ſeed of Jacob may be raiſed in you to travel out of this barren ſtate, even out of this land of darkneſs, and from under the ſhadow of death, to the land where life lives and flouriſhes, and daily diſtributeth plentiful nouriſhment and refreſhment to all its offſpring, who are taught to wait for it, and to feed on it in the holy place, out of the ſight of the eye of the fleſhly wiſdom.

And ye who are ſtill gaſping after the living God, on whom the breathings of life ſtill abide; who remain unſatisfied inwardly for want of the preſence of the Lord, and whoſe hearts ſtill mourn and lament deeply after him, oh! conſider what is the matter, that ye have mourned ſo long, and ſought ſo long, and yet to this day are at a diſtance from the thing ye have mourned for and ſought after!

"Strait is the gate, narrow is the way, that lead-
"eth unto life, and few there be that find it." The way of unbelief is broad, yea, the way of belief is broad alſo. It is eaſy for a man ſo to believe concerning Chriſt, or in Chriſt, (as his heart may call it) as

as to miſs of the nature of the true faith, and of the ſweet and bleſſed effects which accompany it. It is eaſy likewiſe to miſs the yoke, (to take up a wrong yoke, in the ſelf-will, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-interpretation of ſcriptures) or eaſy ſtarting aſide from the true yoke; but it is hard coming under the yoke of the life, and hard abiding under it. Again, it is eaſy miſ-learning: a man may ſo read, and ſo hear, as that he may be always learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; never come to the truth as it is received and held in Jeſus; but may ſo get and hold the knowledge of the truth, as man in his wiſdom may get and hold it from the letter. And if a man thus miſs the way, how can he attain the end? If a man begin not in the true faith, in the living faith, how can he attain the reſt which the true faith alone leads to? If a man miſs of the yoke, or abide not conſtantly under the yoke, how can he meet with the true eaſe and reſt which is in it, and which it alone can adminiſter? If a man learn not the truth aright of the true teacher, how can he ever reap the effects of the true knowledge? Ah! poor hearts! it is not enough to have breathings after God, nor to be very diligent and induſtrious, either in outward ordinances, or inward exerciſes of ſpirit; but the way of the goſpel muſt be caſt up by God, and the ſoul led into it by him, and daily preſerved by him, and muſt walk in the path which is proper for it to walk in, or it may mourn and cry all its days, and never meet with that enjoyment of God, and ſatisfaction in God, which it waits for, and cries after. It is one thing to mourn after a goſpel-ſtate, but another thing to be brought into it by the power. With my heart I own thoſe that mourn after and feel the want of God, wherever they are; but this I know certainly, that they can never come to the enjoyment of him, but in that living path which the ſcriptures teſtify of to be in him who is the life, and which his Spirit is now found manifeſtly leading into. Bleſſed be his name!

Queſt.

Queſt. *But how may my poor ſoul, who have long mourned, and groaned, and been ſick of love after my beloved, but could never attain to the ſatisfactory enjoyment of him, come to walk in his path, that ſo I may meet with, and lie down in, the power of life and ſalvation which the goſpel holds forth to the true believer, and which I have been long ſenſible of the deep want of?*

Anſ. Thou that wouldſt enjoy thy beloved, and feel the reſt of his goſpel, and walk in that path which leads thereto, wait to learn of the Spirit theſe things following:

1. *Know what it is that is to walk in the path of life, and indeed is alone capable of walking therein.* It is that which groans, and which mourns; that which is begotten of God in thee. The path of life is for the ſeed of life. The true knowledge of the way, with the walking in the way, is reſerved for God's child, for God's traveller. Therefore keep in the regeneration, keep in the birth; be no more than God hath made thee. Give over thine own willing; give over thine own running; give over thine own deſiring to know or to be any thing, and ſink down to the ſeed which God ſows in the heart, and let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou ſhalt find by ſweet experience that the Lord knows that, and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is his portion. And as thou takeſt up the croſs to thyſelf, and ſuffereſt that to overſpread and become a yoke over thee, thou ſhalt become renewed, and enjoy life, and the everlaſting inheritance in that.

2. *Know in what light it is to walk,* which is in the light of the Spirit. There the child is begotten, (not in Satan's darkneſs, or higheſt transformings into the likeneſs of light, which is but darkneſs; nor in the light of man's wiſdom, ſearching knowledge, or comprehenſion) and there it walks: in that light it fetcheth every ſtep and motion towards the land of life; therefore hold no knowledge out of the Spirit. If any knowledge concerning the things of God be held

out of the freſhneſs of the Spirit, it preſently proves dead and unprofitable. The ſpiritual Iſrael cannot travel without a ſpiritual light; which light is eternal and incomprehenſible, and cannot be held by man's ſpirit, but ſhineth freſh in the renewed ſpirit every day, and ſo is daily gathering it more and more inward into itſelf, comprehending it in itſelf, and preſerving it in its own purity, clearneſs, and brightneſs. Oh! this is it hath undone many, even catching at light from the Spirit, tranſplanting the image of divine things into the earthly principle, and there holding of them in the earthly part, growing wiſe by them there, and making uſe of them from thence as man ſees good, and not ſeeing a neceſſity of depending on the Spirit for freſh light and life every day to every ſpiritual motion. Thus the traveller ſoon comes to loſe the true path, and inſtead thereof travels on in a road of his own wiſdom's forming: and ſo though he ſeems to himſelf to make a large progreſs, yet makes no true progreſs at all, but is exceedingly run out aſide in a by-way; all which ground he muſt traverſe back again, ere he can come to the truth of his former ſtate, or proceed in the true travel.

3. *Know and keep to the power*, which alone began any true work in the heart, which alone alſo can preſerve it, and which alone can carry it on. Chriſt was made a prieſt, *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life:* and every ſacrificer under him (which every true believer is) is ſo made by the ſame power. The powers of darkneſs are continually at hand, which nothing can ſtand its ground againſt (much leſs walk on ſafely) without being in that power which is above them. The firſt coming to Chriſt muſt be in the power of the Father's drawing: and no believing afterwards is of the true nature, nor will avail the ſoul in its progreſs and travels towards life, but what abides in, and goeth forth in the ſame power. So the taking up the yoke, and drawing in it, muſt be by the power of the new life; and ſo muſt the diſciple's learning be. As the maſter teacheth in the power of the Spirit

Spirit the things which alone can be ſeen with the new eye, heard with the new ear, and received into the new heart; ſo the ſcholar muſt learn and receive his leſſons of life in the ſame power. Let any diſciple of Chriſt be from under the ſhadow of the power, believe out of the power, walk out of the power, act out of the power, he is from that wherein his life ſtands, and wherein alone is his preſervation; and ah! how liable is he then to falls, bruiſes, ſnares, and temptations of the enemy.

4. *Watch againſt the ſelfiſh wiſdom*, in every ſtep of thy growth, and in every ſpiritual motion, that that come not between thee and thy life; that that deceive thee not with a likeneſs, a ſhadow, making it appear more pleaſing to the eye than the ſubſtance. Every ſtep of thy way it will be laying baits for thee; and it is eaſy for deceit to enter thee at any time, and for that wiſdom to get up in thee under an appearance of ſpiritual wiſdom, unleſs the Lord tenderly and powerfully preſerve thee: and if it prevail, it will lead thee from the path of the true wiſdom; it will cozen thee with a falſe faith, inſtead of the true faith; with falſe praying, inſtead of the breathings of the true child; with diligence and zeal in thy falſe way, inſtead of the true zeal and diligence; yea, it will hurry thee on in the path of error, ſhutting that eye in thee which ſhould ſee, and hardening thine heart againſt thy boſom friend. And being thus deceived, thou mayeſt be as zealous in thy age and generation againſt the truth, as the Jews were in theirs: and as certainly as they put Chriſt to death, and perſecuted his apoſtles, though they cried up the former prophets, ſo certainly thou (under this deceit) canſt not but act againſt the preſent diſpenſation and appearance of Chriſt's Spirit, and would perſecute either the prophets, apoſtles, or Chriſt himſelf, were it their preſent day now ſo to appear as formerly they did.

5. *Let nothing judge in thee* (concerning thine own heart, or concerning others, or concerning any way or truth of God) *but only the begotten of God* in the heart. Let the light in which thou art begotten to God, and

which ſhines upon his begotten, be the only judge in thee, and then thou canſt not err in judgment. Be not haſty, be not forward in judgment; keep back to the life, ſtill waiting for the appearance and openings of the life. A few ſteps fetched in the life and power of God are much ſafer and ſweeter than an haſty progreſs in the haſty forward ſpirit.

Indeed this is the true religion, to feel God beginning the work, and to wait on him for his carrying it on. The feeling of God's Spirit beginning ſomewhat in the heart, the heart's waiting on him for more of his Spirit, and walking on with him in his Spirit, as he pleaſeth to quicken, lead, draw, and ſtrengthen; this is the ſpiritual and true religion: and there is no duty or ordinance of the goſpel out of the Spirit; but it is eaſy crying up and obſerving the likeneſs of any of them out of the Spirit, into which obſervance a ſtrange ſpirit eaſily enters; and then that which was of God in the heart ſoon withers, and a contrary building is raiſed, and the ſtate of the heart changed. Oh! wait on the Lord, that he may give you to underſtand theſe things; for the apoſtaſy from God is very deep, and more provoking among the Proteſtants than among the Papiſts yea, moſt of all provoking where it is moſt inward and ſpiritual.

Queſt. *But how may I know and keep to the begotten of God, and to the light and power of the Lord, and keep down the fleſhly wiſdom and comprehenſion concerning the things of God?*

Anſ. When God begets life in the heart, there is a ſavour of it in thy veſſel, and a ſecret living warmth and virtue, which the heart in ſome meaſure feels, whereby it is known. Lie low in the fear of the Moſt High, that this leaven may grow and increaſe in thee. This is the leaven of the kingdom; this is it which muſt change thy heart and nature, and make thy veſſel (which perhaps hath been long and much corrupted) fit to receive the treaſure of the kingdom. Now while the ſavour is upon thee, while the virtue of the life is freſh in thee, thou findeſt ſome ſtrength

toward

towards God, with ſome little taſte and diſcerning of the things of his kingdom. Know thy weakneſs, and go not beyond thy meaſure; but in what thou haſt received bow before the fulneſs, worſhip God in that, and be patient in what he exerciſes thee withal, waiting for more from him. And when the night comes upon thee, and thou perhaps art at a loſs, miſſing the ſavour and preſence of the life, and not knowing how to come by it again, be patient and ſtill, and thou wilt find breathings after a freſh viſitation, and a meek, humble, broken ſpirit before the Lord. Thou wilt ſee thou canſt do nothing to recover his preſence again; nay, thou canſt not ſo much as wait for him, or breathe after him, without his help; but he is nigh to the poor, nigh to the broken, nigh to the diſtreſſed, nigh to the helpleſs. Oh! do not with thy fleſhly cries and roarings think to awaken thy beloved before his ſeaſon; but in the night of diſtreſs, feel after ſomewhat which may quiet and ſtay thy heart till the next ſpringing of the day. The ſun will ariſe, which will ſcatter the clouds; and he is near thee who will give thee to hope that thou ſhalt yet ſee God, and find again the quickenings and leadings of his Spirit. And in the day of his power thou wilt find ſtrength to walk with him; yea, in the day of thy weakneſs his grace will be ſufficient for thee; and he will nurture thee up in his life by his pure Spirit, cauſing thee to grow under his ſhadow; and he will be teaching thee to live, and to ſpeak, and to move and act from the principle, and within the compaſs of his light and life eternal. Only be not wiſe to catch the notion of things into the earthly part, where the moth can corrupt, and where the thief can break through and ſteal; but know the divine treaſury, where all the things of life are treaſured up by the Spirit, and handed forth to the living child with freſh life, according to its need of them. And thus thy heart being kept cloſe to God, and thy ſpiritual ſenſes continually exerciſed about the things of God, it will be eaſy to thee to know the Shepherd's voice, and to diſtinguiſh

the ſound of the Spirit in thine own heart: and that which tries ſpirits and motions in thine own heart, will alſo give thee the diſcerning of truth and error abroad, even of the Spirit of God, and the ſpirit of Satan in others; ſo that thou wilt be able to try not only words, but ſpirits, becoming acquainted with the anointing, which ſavours all things, and will give thee to judge, not by the words, but by the power: for thou thyſelf being in the power, in the anointing, in the ſavour, it will become natural to thee to feel, to taſte, to know, and unite with what is one with thy life, what comes from the ſame Spirit in others, and to turn from the contrary. And thus thy life, thy growth, thy path will be ſweet, ſafe, clear, certain, demonſtrative in the Spirit, and paſt all reaſonings of fleſh and blood, either in thyſelf or others. The beginning of life eternal is in an higher principle than man can come at. Man's wiſdom and knowledge of the things of God is but brutiſh before it. As thou comeſt into that principle, abideſt and groweſt in that principle, thou art beyond man's judgment, and art able to judge man, and fathom his whole courſe as with a ſpan; but art quite out of his reach in the loweſt of thy motions, thoughts, or actions; I mean ſuch as flow from, and are comprehended in, the life.

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

CON-

CONCERNING THE

WORSHIP of the LIVING GOD,

Which he teacheth ISRAEL, his People,

Who know him to be the Only True GOD, and the Worſhip which he teacheth them, to be the Only True Spiritual WORSHIP.

WITH

Some QUESTIONS and ANSWERS relating to Converſion, and to Tenderneſs of Conſcience.

BECAUSE the *worſhip of God* is a weighty thing, and there have been (and ſtill are) ſo many errors about it, and the errors therein are of ſuch dangerous conſequence, both in relation to mens eternal eſtate hereafter, and to their right conſtitution, peace, and welfare in this world; and becauſe I have had deep experience concerning the *worſhip of God* from a child, having travelled in ſpirit with my God for the right knowledge thereof, and in ſingleneſs of heart giving up unto him, according as he hath taught and led my poor, needy, depending ſoul; I ſay, therefore is it on my heart, to anſwer ſome few queſtions concerning the *worſhip of God*, for the ſervice of ſuch as both deſire and need inſtruction therein.

Queſt. 1. *Who is the worſhipper, the acceptable worſhipper in the ſight of God? Or whom hath God choſen out, to hold forth his worſhip in the ſight of the world, ſince he rejected the Jews with their worſhip?*

That God hath appointed a choſen people to worſhip him, that I pre-ſuppoſe; though, if need were, the proof thereof might be ready at hand. It is not every man that would thruſt himſelf upon the Lord, whom the Lord will accept; but "the Father ſeeketh "ſuch to worſhip him," John iv. 23. There is a capacity to be found in man, to make him a worſhipper; even ſuch a capacity, as may enable him to perform that worſhip which God requireth of him. Now this is the thing to be enquired into; *What this capacity is, and who are the perſons that are found in this capacity?*

Anſ. The worſhipper in the times of the goſpel, the worſhipper under the New Teſtament, is "he "that is born of God." He that is drawn out of the dark ſpirit of this world, and formed anew in the light of God's Spirit. He that is a Jew inward, he that hath the uncircumciſion of his heart cut off by the power of God; this is the worſhipper, whom "the Father ſeeks to worſhip him." This is the ſort of worſhippers God choſe, when he caſt off the Jews. God did not chooſe any one nation, or many nations, inſtead of that one which he caſt off; but he ſent his apoſtles and miniſters among all nations, to gather a ſpiritual ſeed, inſtead of the natural. And theſe alone are capable of ſetting up, and holding forth, his ſpiritual worſhip unto the world, and to provoke them to wait for, and preſs towards, the capacity of coming into the ſame ſpiritual worſhip with them.

Queſt. 2. *Which is the place of worſhip?*

Anſ. The only place of worſhip in the New Teſtament, is where the ſpiritual worſhippers meet together. The place is ſpiritual. As the worſhip is ſpiritual, ſo is the place where it is to be offered. It hath a ſpiritual conſideration; not outward, as under the law.

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It is to be offered in the Spirit; that is the place. Where doth my ſoul offer its private worſhip to God? Hath it relation to any outward place? Or is it in the building which God hath reared up in my heart by his Spirit? Which building ſtands in, and is comprehended in, his Spirit. And I can offer his publick worſhip in no other place, but in a building of the ſame nature, in an houſe built of more of the ſame ſtones. This then is the way of worſhipping in the true light; divers living ſtones meeting together, every one retiring in ſpirit into the living name, into the power which begat them, they all meet in one and the ſame place, in one and the ſame power, in one and the ſame fountain of life; and here they bow down to the Father of life, offering up living ſacrifices to him, and receiving the bread and water of life from him, and feeding in the rich paſtures of his infinite fulneſs. In the holy city, in the living temple, which is built by God, of the ſtone which all other builders refuſe, is the place of the worſhip of the living God, where the true Jews meet to offer up their ſpirits, ſouls, and bodies, a living ſacrifice to the Father of life; and where they meet with ſuch a glorious preſence and power of the Father, as none but the true Jews were ever acquainted with.

Queſt. 3. *What is the worſhip, or what are the ſacrifices, which the true worſhippers offer up to God in this holy place?*

Anſ. The gifts of his Spirit. Theſe they offer up, and nothing elſe. The breathings which the Father gives into the heart of the child, they are breathed back unto him in the ſame ſpirit of life; in the living ſenſe, in the quickening power. Nothing of man's wiſdom, nothing of man's invention, nothing according to man's will, nothing that would pleaſe the fleſh, or ſeem glorious in its eye, is offered up here; but the exhortations, or directions, or reproofs that ſpring up in God's light, in God's wiſdom, they are given forth in the leadings, and by the guidance of his Spirit,

rit, and they reach to the hearts of thoſe, to whom he pleaſeth to direct them. And this is the ground of ſuch meltings, and breakings, and convictions of ſoul (and ſuch-like inward operations) as are frequently found in ſuch aſſemblies. For the living God is there, and the dread of his power overſpreads the hearts of ſuch as are gathered into and aſſembled in his name; and the life ſprings in the earthen veſſels, and the favour is precious to all that have their ſpiritual ſenſes.

Queſt. 4. *What is the ſeaſon of offering up theſe gifts?*

Anſ. The ſeaſons of the true worſhip ſtand in the will of God. They are gifts, and the time of them ſtands in the will of the Giver. *Prayer* is a gift. A man cannot pray when he will; but he is to watch and to wait, when the Father will kindle in him living breathings towards himſelf. So the *word of God* (whether of exhortation or inſtruction) is a gift, which is to be waited for, and then to be given forth in the life and ſtrength of that Spirit which cauſed it to ſpring. Indeed it is an hard matter either to ſpeak the word of the Lord, or to hear the word of the Lord. A man may eaſily ſpeak what he invents, and another may eaſily hear and judge of ſuch words; but to ſpeak the word of life, requires the tongue of the learned in the language of God's Spirit; and to hear the word of life, requires a quickened ear: and to know the times and ſeaſons of the Spirit, requires both being begotten of the Spirit, and being acquainted with it.

Queſt. 5. *Was this the worſhip of the former Chriſtians in the apoſtles days?*

Anſ. Search the ſcriptures. Were not they come to the New Jeruſalem? And where did they offer their ſacrifices? Did they offer them in the Old Jeruſalem, or at *Samaria*, or the mountain where the fathers worſhipped? Or did they not rather offer them at the Mount Sion, to which they were come; where the male of the flock (even the Lamb without ſpot) is known,

known, and the blood of ſprinkling felt? Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. and 1 Pet. ii. 5. Oh! read! read in the life of God! the nature of the things themſelves; and do not feed upon your own imaginations, or the imaginations of any other men concerning them. Sweet is our God; his living preſence is exceedingly nouriſhing to the ſoul; precious is his power felt in the heart; it is no leſs than life eternal to worſhip him in his Spirit. Oh! let not the enemy of the ſoul cheat your ſouls any longer of the precious things of his kingdom, with huſky and dry food inſtead thereof, which only gratifieth the earthly part, but nouriſheth not the immortal life.

Queſt. 6. *How came the worſhip of God to be tranſformed and changed ſo from the living power, into ſuch dead formal ways, as generally worſhippers in the world are found in?*

Anſ. The enemy hath done this, by God's permiſſion. The Lord was pleaſed to ſuffer him thus far to prevail againſt the truth; even to get into the form of it, and there to beget men into the form, and then deny and turn againſt the power. And this is the way of antichriſt in kingdoms and nations, even to ſet up a formal way of worſhip, and by it to fight againſt the true power.

Queſt. 7. *How long hath this been done, and how long is it yet to laſt?*

Anſ. From antichriſt's beginning, all the time of his reign, until his overthrow. The formal way of religion will never be overturned, nor the power of religion find place in the earth, but there will be ſtill countenancing of formal ways of worſhip, and turning head againſt the power and life of the Spirit, until antichriſt's time come to an end, and the Lord conſume him by the Spirit of his mouth, and deſtroy him by the brightneſs of his coming.

Queſt. 8. *When ſhall this be?*

Anſ. The Lord is about this work. He hath already raiſed up that, which hath not been raiſed up for

for many generations; and the Lord hath ſorely ſmote down the Spirit of antichriſt in many hearts already; and he is fetching a great and univerſal blow at him; at which ſtroke, when it cometh from the throne of God, the nations ſhall tremble before him; and it will be as honourable to wait for the movings of his Spirit, and to worſhip him alone therein, as now it is reproachful.

SOME

Some QUESTIONS and ANSWERS relating to Converſion, and to Tenderneſs of Conſcience.

Queſt. *WHAT is the way of converſion?*

Anſ. To turn men from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Queſt. *When is a man converted?*

Anſ. When he is gathered into the light, and into the power, out of the darkneſs of ſin and dominions of Satan.

Queſt. *How is man converted?*

Anſ. By the operation of the light and power of God upon his conſcience.

Queſt. *In what condition is the conſcience before God works upon it?*

Anſ. Hard and corrupt; hardened by ſelfiſh reaſonings and dark imaginations, againſt the convictions of the light and operations of the power of God, and corrupted with the ſin and iniquity that dwells in it.

Queſt. *What doth God make it in his working upon it?*

Anſ. Gentle and tender, fit to receive the impreſſions of his Spirit. By the influence and power of his Spirit on the conſcience, he openeth the ear to hearken to his voice, and prepareth the heart to follow him in his leadings.

Queſt. *How doth God carry on his work in the converted ſoul?*

Anſ. By keeping it low and tender, out of the ſelf-wiſdom and hardening reaſonings of the human underſtanding: by this means he keeps it pliable to the light and power of his Spirit.

Queſt. *Is only the tender conſcience then fit to be wrought upon by God?*

Anſ.

Anſ. Yea, indeed, that alone. The heart that is hard is inconſiderate of the voice of God, and ſtiff and ſtubborn againſt it; having ever at hand ſome wiſdom or will of the fleſh, to withſtand the voice and leadings of God by.

Queſt. *Who is it that preſerves the conſcience tender?*

Anſ. The Lord of the conſcience. He who made it, knoweth the proper temper of it; and his light and power is alone able to preſerve it in that tenderneſs which he formed it in.

Queſt. *What is it that hardens the conſcience?*

Anſ. The wiſdom of the fleſh. Man, having gained a wiſdom out of the light of God, by the imaginations, reaſonings, and ſtrength thereof, hardens himſelf againſt God.

Queſt. *What is moſt neceſſary for a man to be vigilant in, that deſires to have the work of converſion to go on in his heart?*

Anſ. To be careful to turn from and avoid the reaſonings of man's wiſdom, and to have his eye and ear open to the light and voice of God's Spirit, that his conſcience may be kept upright and clear before the Lord.

Queſt. *What ſtains the conſcience?*

Anſ. Any diſobedience to God's Spirit, any hearkening to, or following the voice of, a ſtrange ſpirit. This lets in the darkneſs, which defiles, even as the light cleanſes.

Queſt. *Is a man then to expect ſuch a thing as the leadings of God's Spirit in his conſcience?*

Anſ. A man cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but he muſt be firſt born again, even "born of the "Spirit." So ſaith the ſcripture, and ſo ſaith the experience of every one who feels the new-birth. And when he is born of the Spirit, he is to abide with him, and learn the law of the new life, and receive power from him daily; or the ſpirit of darkneſs will ſoon get ground upon him, and by degrees be recovering him back again into his dominions.

Queſt.

Queſt. *Surely if it be thus, hard is the way of religion, and few there be who are found in the truth of it.*

Anſ. The way of religion is hard indeed, and wholly contrary both to man's wiſdom and will; inſomuch as he cannot enter into it, nor walk therein, but as they are cut down. He that will be a diſciple of Chriſt, and follow the leadings of his Spirit, muſt deny himſelf wholly, and become another's, and be content to ſtand or fall to his own Maſter. He cannot pleaſe men, no not in his worſhipping of God; but muſt turn from that which is glorious in their eyes, and ſacrifice that which is to them an abomination. So that he muſt look to be condemned by men, who will be approved in the ſight of God.

Queſt. *Why hath God put his people upon ſuch hardſhip, as ſtill (in all ages and generations) to walk in a way contrary to the world, and ſtill to be the objects of its hatred, ſcorn, and perſecution?*

Anſ. How can it be otherwiſe, he begetting them in a Spirit contrary to the world, and which teſtifieth againſt the world, ſhewing that the deeds thereof are evil? How can the ſpirit of the world but ſtill turn againſt ſuch, and hate, and perſecute them?

Queſt. *How long ſhall it be thus?*

Anſ. Till truth be raiſed by the power of God into dominion over the ſpirit and power of darkneſs. The Spirit of life now ſuffers under the burden of man's corruptions; in love to them, ſtriving to ſave them therefrom. There is ſomewhat in every ſinner that at ſeaſons groans under the weight of his ſins, and in ſome proportion ſtrives againſt the burden thereof. This ſhall not always lie underneath; but in the day of the Lord riſe over the tranſgreſſor: and in that day ſhall Iſrael be glorious with his God, and receive praiſe of him, and be eaſed of all that hath oppreſſed him.

Queſt. *Is there ſuch a day to be?*

Anſ. The ſcriptures teſtify of ſuch a day, wherein the Lord "alone ſhall be exalted," and "wherein he "will take away the rebuke of his people from off all "the

" the earth," and bring down " all that is high and " lifted up" above the fear and Spirit of the Lord: and in this our age the Lord hath chosen many messengers to run up down, and proclaim this day. And as sure as the Lord liveth, what he hath spoken shall come to pass, and not a tittle of it fall to the ground. God did not make man for him to serve his own lusts, nor his creation to serve the lusts of man; but he made man to fear before and serve his Creator; and he made the creatures to be ordered by man in the fear and wisdom of God to the glory of God. The Spirit of God now groaneth under man's iniquity; the spirits of his people mourn and sigh also; yea, and the very creatures groan under the *bondage of corruption*; and the God of bowels heareth their cry; and a day, even a mighty day of redemption and deliverance is determined, wherein the spirit of the world shall be sunk down, with all its weight of wickedness, and the Spirit of life and righteousness rise in its glory.

Amen, hallelujah! everlasting praises to the Omnipotent One, *who was, and is, and is a coming*; who hath reigned, doth reign, and will reign, over all the powers of darkness, in the pure power and glory of his life for evermore. Let all the lambs skip for joy; let all the stars of the morning shout: for the darkness vanisheth, and is passing away, and the light of life shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. *Amen, hallelujah!*

Happy is the eye that seeth this, and the heart that prepareth for it, overlooking all that stands between. This is the hope of Israel, and the expectation of all that wait for the Lord, which he is hastening upon the earth.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME

SOME

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

FOR THE

OPENING of the EYES

OF THE

JEWS NATURAL.

That they may ſee the HOPE of ISRAEL, which hath ſo long been hid from them.

WITH SOME

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS,

FOR THE

Direction, Comfort, Help, and Furtherance of God's Spiritual Iſrael, in their Travels in Spirit from Spiritual Egypt through the Spiritual Wilderneſs, to Spiritual Canaan;

WHICH IS

The Land where the Redeemed Soul flouriſheth in the Life, walking with God, and worſhipping him in Spirit and Truth.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

THE PREFACE.

SEVERAL things hath the life, begotten by the eternal virtue, breathed in me towards my Father for, in relation both to myſelf and others, from my childhood. As touching myſelf; firſt, that I might be a veſſel for him; that I might be freed from the bondage of corruption, and brought forth in the image of his life. Secondly, That I might be filled with his life; that I might be ſatisfied in the preſence, and with the fulneſs of the ſpring of my life; even that I might have enough of my God in my heart continually. Thirdly, That he would of his own mere goodneſs both preſerve the veſſel, and dwell in it for ever; that ſo my tenure and poſſeſſion of him, and fitneſs for him, might be of his grace, of his love, of his good-will, of his own nature, depending wholly and altogether on him, and not at all on any thing that can be expected from the creaturehood in its pure ſtate. And likewiſe that if he pleaſed to uſe me in any ſervice, it might of him, and for him, and to him: that he would bring me ſo low in myſelf, that I might not be able to detain any of his glory and virtue from him; but the meanneſs of the veſſel might ſtill ſo appear to me, and alſo be ſo ſenſibly diſcerned and acknowledged by all other eyes alſo, that the excellency of the power and of the glory might run back intirely into his pure boſom.

Beſides theſe, there have been vehement deſires in me concerning others alſo. Firſt, Towards mankind in general, that they might have an exceeding merciful and powerful day of viſitation, even that the whole earth might be touched with the power of life, and drawn out of the darkneſs. Oh! how hath my ſoul breathed for loſt mankind! and how hath my ſpirit travailed (with unutterable pangs and earneſtneſs) for unheard-of, unthought-of, and altogether unexpected mercy and good-will towards the ſons of men in general. Secondly, Towards my brethren in ſpirit, that they might know the day of redemption and power in Spirit, and not always lie grovelling on the earth, and groaning and mourning becauſe of the luſts and corruptions, but might know deliverance in power, and might ſing the ſong of Moſes, and the ſong of the Lamb (becauſe of their feeling victory over Pharaoh and the dragon); and might ſerve and worſhip the living God in Spirit and truth, without fear of interruption and captivity from the enemy any more. Thirdly, Towards the Jews after the fleſh, that their iniquity might be blotted out, their wound healed, the pure eye opened in them, and the pure glory revealed to them; that they might know the Shepherd of Iſrael in Spirit, the ſpiritual tents of Jacob, the beauty of the footſteps of the ſpiritual flock, and might travel out of their darkneſs, earthlineſs, and literal knowledge, into the land of pure life, reſt, peace, and freſh joy in the living God, (whereof their land of Canaan, with all the good things thereof, was but a ſhadow) and might be anointed with the freſh oil of the ſalvation of the Meſſiah, and might become, indeed, an holy nation; yea, a kingdom of prieſts, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices on God's ſpiritual altar.

My ſoul ſtill breatheth to the Lord, and waiteth on him for all theſe things; and as he draweth my ſpirit forth, ſo am I ready in ſpirit to be ſerviceable unto him therein. Theſe preſent drawings and openings of my

my life, in the Queſtions and Anſwers following, are both towards the Jews in the fleſh, and alſo the Jews in ſpirit, that they may meet in One, even in the one path and paſture of life, where there is one Shepherd, one ſeed, one flock, one Spirit, one beginning, one progreſs, one end, in one and the ſame circle of life. The Lord my God take it into his own hand, diſpoſe of it for good, manage and bleſs it according to his pleaſure!

I. P.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR THE OPENING of the EYES OF THE JEWS NATURAL.

Queſt. *WHAT was the riſe of that people the Jews?*

Anſ. They came of Abraham after the fleſh, who was God's friend, whom God took from his father's houſe, and from his native country (where he was worſhipping and ſerving idols) to be the ſtock and pattern of the faithful; both of the Jews according to the fleſh, and of the Jews in ſpirit. Of this root, of this ſtock, came this people according to the fleſh, who were an holy nation, a circumciſed people, a ſanctified people outwardly; and (as long as their day laſted) were the beloved of God, the pitied, the pardoned, the redeemed ones, even until the ſhadows were

were finiſhed, and the ſeaſon came for the ſubſtance to appear and be ſet up in the world; whereof they had the firſt offer alſo, and out of whom was the firſt gathering for the ſpiritual building. But they generally hardening their hearts, and cleaving to the wiſdom and knowledge which their wiſe-ones had taught them, (from their miſunderſtanding the letter of the ſcriptures) miſſed of the Spirit, rebelled againſt the redeeming power, and ſo loſt their ſhare in the inward glory, and by God's righteous hand were cut off from their outward alſo, their day being ſpent, and the blood, not only of the prophets, but of the Son and heir himſelf alſo, required at their hands.

Queſt. *How came this people to be the choſen people at firſt, and ſo long to continue ſuch?*

Anſ. It was not for their righteouſneſs, not for their lovelineſs, or pliableneſs to God above other people; but becauſe it pleaſed the Lord freely to love them, and to pitch upon them for the people of his choice after the fleſh, in the free covenant which he made with Abraham. "The earth is the Lord's, with the "fulneſs thereof;" and he may chooſe whom he will to fill with his inward and ſpiritual glory, (even with the manifeſtations of his pure love, life, and preſence) and he may alſo chooſe whom he will to make outwardly or typically beloved, great, and glorious. He choſe Abraham freely, he gave to Abraham an heart to follow him, he gave him the faith and obedience which made him accepted with him; and he choſe his ſeed after the Spirit to be his eternal heir, and his ſeed after the fleſh to be his temporary heir. Thus of Iſaac in Spirit, came the children of the promiſe in Spirit; and of Iſaac after the fleſh, came the ſeed of promiſe after the fleſh. Sarah after the fleſh bare one of theſe: the Sarah repreſented by her (or the free woman which is from above) bare the other. And of Iſaac comes Jacob, worm Jacob, who ſerves for his wife; who flies from the face of Eſau, yet afterwards finds favour in his eyes. From this worm do the twelve patriarchs branch forth, who were the heads of

the tribes of Iſrael. Thus hath it been with that nation according to the letter; and thus it hath alſo been, and is ſtill, inwardly in Spirit; as the Iſrael of God, the Jews in Spirit (who are learned in the law of the Spirit of life) can very well read. Thus outwardly Iſrael was God's child, Ephraim his dear, his beloved, his pleaſant ſon; Judah his praiſe, whom his heart was towards, and to whom he ſtretched forth his arm of ſalvation all the day long. "In all their af-"fliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his pre-"ſence ſaved them; and he ſaid, Surely they are my "people, children that will not lie; ſo he became "their Saviour." Thus it was with them, till the day of Iſrael after the fleſh expired, and the day of Iſrael in Spirit was to ſucceed in the ſight of the world.

Queſt. *What was the end for which God choſe that people?*

Anſ. It was to be a veſſel for him to form, to try and experiment what his love could bring them to, and bring forth in them in that way of manifeſtation and operation. This God opens to Jeremiah concerning them, bidding him go down to the houſe of the potter; where, in a parable, they might read their own ſtate, and what they were to expect from God, even to be formed by God unto the utmoſt, until he had made a perfect trial of them, and then to be broken and laid aſide, as a veſſel that could never be fitted for the Maſter's uſe in this way of diſpenſation, Jer. xviii. 4. On the Lord's part there was no defect towards his child, his ſpouſe, his vineyard, his garden of pleaſant plants (as this people was in that diſpenſation); for he was ſtill a Father to them, faithful in covenant, tender in bowels, abundant in loving-kindneſs and mercies: yea, what could be expected from the Lord towards a people, according to that diſpenſation, which the Lord failed in? But they were ſtill faithleſs, continually breaking covenant, erring from his dear and tender love, and drawing down the ſtrokes of his wrath upon them; forſaking the guide of their youth, forgetting the love of their eſ-

pouſals;

pouſals; continually ſtarting aſide from the right ſtate, wherein God pleaſed at firſt to ſet them, or at any time afterwards in any meaſure to reduce them.

Queſt. *How did God exerciſe and try them to the utmoſt, even till at length it was plainly manifeſt, that there was no firm keeping a people to him by virtue of that diſpenſation; but he muſt neceſſarily cut them off, chooſe another people, and take another courſe; if he would have a people for his heart to love and delight in, and for them to enjoy and poſſeſs him?*

Anſ. He tried them ſeveral ways, and in ſeveral ſtates and conditions; as, Firſt, In a ſtate of captivity in the land of Egypt. Secondly, In a ſtate of ſtraits and continual dependence upon God, even for neceſſaries, in the wilderneſs. Thirdly, In a ſtate of enlargedneſs in the land of Canaan, which flowed with plentiful proviſions for the outward man (which were alſo ſhadows and inſtructions concerning the inward bleſſedneſs). Fourthly, In often captivities. Fifthly, In returns to their land again, with ſettlement and peace, and many bleſſings therein.

Queſt. *How did God try them in Egypt?*

Anſ. Firſt, With ſore bondage and oppreſſion from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Secondly, With giving them the feeling of their ſtate, the ſenſe of their bondage, and cauſing them to cry unto the Lord for deliverance. Thirdly, In raiſing up a deliverer, and giving them a ſign of the deliverance by the hand of the deliverer, in his ſmiting of an Egyptian, and ſaving an Hebrew. Fourthly, In ſending the deliverer to them, with promiſes of deliverance, and with ſigns and ſymptoms of the delivering power. Fifthly, In pardoning their unbelief and rebellions againſt him in Egypt, and ſhewing many ſigns and wonders for them in that land, till at length he had brought them forth by his mighty out-ſtretched arm, even againſt the will and mind of Pharaoh and their taſk-maſters.

Queſt. *How did God find them in Egypt upon this trial?*

Anſ.

Anſ. Very unbelieving, very ſtubborn, miſinterpreting his ſign of deliverance, reaſoning againſt his promiſe, becauſe it came not ſo ſoon, and after the manner they expected. When he lifted up his hand to them to redeem them from under Pharaoh, to bring them forth out of the land of bondage, to the good land he had eſpied for them, and bid them forſake the idolatrous worſhips of Egypt, and not defile themſelves any longer therewith; becauſe he was now to become the Lord their God, and to appear in his power for them; yet they would not, Ezek. xx. 5, &c. When Moſes would have reconciled an Hebrew to his brother, he would not hear him; but upbraided him for ſlaying the Egyptian, not waiting on God to underſtand the figure, but miſinterpreting and abuſing it in the fleſhly mind. When the deliverance ſucceeded not according to their expectations, they murmured againſt Moſes and Aaron; and when God ſent them again with a freſh promiſe, they would not mind it. Yet God bare with all this in them, and did not caſt them off, but aſſuaged his wrath, and ſtirred up his love to make a further trial of them.

Queſt. *How did God try them in the wilderneſs?*

Anſ. By many temptations, ſigns, and wonders; by powerful appearances for them againſt their enemies; by bringing them into many ſtraits; by unexpected and impoſſible ſupplies (I mean impoſſible to the ſight or expectation of the outward eye); as with bread from heaven, multitudes of quails, water from the rock, keeping their clothes and ſhoes from wearing out and decaying. Likewiſe he gave them an holy and righteous law to inform their minds in equity and righteouſneſs; directing them in an holy way of walking with God, and one towards another, and chalking out unto them an acceptable path of worſhip; and this law was delivered in great majeſty, dread, and terror, to cauſe a deep impreſſion thereof upon their minds.

Queſt. *How did God find them in the wilderneſs?*

Anſ.

Anſ. Full of diſcontent; full of murmuring; full of ſelf-will; full of doubts and queſtionings concerning God's power. They did not wait on him, who had delivered them out of the hand of Pharaoh, and from under the Egyptian taſk-maſters; but they murmured againſt him. They did not wait for food or water when they wanted, but diſtruſted and complained; repining at Moſes and Aaron, and ſometimes talking of making a captain to lead them backward. Neither were they content with the proviſion which God allotted them, (that was mean in their eyes) but they would have fleſh. Though the manna (the light bread as they eſteemed it) of God's choice, and with God's bleſſing, had been far better for them, than the fleſh, with his curſe upon that luſt which aſked it, and would not be content without it. Again, they would not go on towards Canaan, or fight when God would have them, and when his ſtrength would have gone along with them; but when he forbad them, of their own will, and truſting to their own ſtrength, they would go on and fight. It is a ſad record which Moſes (their tender ſhepherd, who with the eye of true light had faithfully obſerved them) left concerning them, Deut. ix. 24. "You have been rebellious "againſt the Lord, from the day that I knew you."

Queſt. *How did God deal with them in reference to the land of Canaan?*

Anſ. Firſt, He prepared them for it. Secondly, He diſpoſſeſſed their enemies, and placed them in it, giving them an inheritance according to their own will. Thirdly, He poured down bleſſings upon them therein.

Queſt. *How did God prepare them for the good land?*

Anſ. Firſt, By many afflictions and exerciſes in the wilderneſs, wherein he judged and wore out the rebellious generation, (who were conſumed with dying) and raiſed up their children in the awe and dread of his mighty power. Secondly, By giving them a righteous law to walk by in every reſpect, that they might not be to ſeek how to pleaſe God, or how to walk one

one towards another, or towards the heathen among them, or round about them; but in every thing might be rightly inſtructed. Thirdly, By warning them of their own proneneſs to err from God, and of the danger thereof, both in relation to the loſs of mercies, and drawing down of judgments; that they might watch againſt the erring nature and tranſgreſſing ſpirit in their hearts. Fourthly, By appointing a way of ſacrifice and mediation, whereby God might be atoned, either for particular perſons, or for the land in general. Fifthly, By directing them to a principle as near to them, and more ſtrong than the unrighteous principle; whereby they might be preſerved in the obedience of the law, and from out of the reach of the curſe.

Queſt. *How did God find them in their own land?*

Anſ. That generation which was thus prepared, thus taught, thus directed, walked ſweetly with the Lord, and was a precious ſavour in his noſtrils; but ſoon after the evil thing ſprang up again in the generations following, and they did quickly corrupt themſelves, departing from the Lord, and running a whoring after their own hearts luſts, Judg. ii. 7, &c.

Queſt. *How did God deal with them then?*

Anſ. He brought them judgment upon judgment, ſtill weightier and weightier upon them, according as their need required, exerciſing loving-kindneſs and mercy towards them, as much as poſſibly their eſtate could bear. He ſent his prophets to forewarn them of the wrath, that they might be ſpared, if poſſible; and when his judgments and ſeverity came, he mingled mercy therewith, that by both he might try to the utmoſt what they might be wrought to. He tried them a long while under the judges, and a long while under the kings, often recovering them and ſetting them to rights, expecting the fruit of his rod and of his love towards them,

Queſt. *What was the reſult of God's trying them under the judges and kings?*

Anſ.

Anſ. They wearied out God's prophets; yea, they wearied out the Lord alſo in that way of diſpenſation. They choſe the falſe prophets before the true, lying divinations before the openings of life, and dead idols before the living God. The kindneſſes and mercies of God were waſted upon them, for with his love they were not drawn; the bellows alſo were burnt, the lead conſumed, the heat of the furnace ſpent upon them, and yet their tin and droſs not purged away. Under the judges they tried out the Lord's patient expectation of good from his delivering hand, inſomuch as he reſolved to deliver them no more, Judg. x. 13. Under the kings they were as unruly, (whether good kings or bad kings, given in love or wrath) inſomuch as the Lord ſaid, "Why ſhould ye be ſtricken "any more? Ye will revolt more and more," Iſa. i. 5. There was, indeed, no bending of Iſrael after the fleſh, and keeping him ſtrait to God, in that way of diſpenſation; therefore muſt he be caſt off; even becoming reprobate ſilver in the ſight of the whole earth, becauſe the Lord would reject him.

Queſt. *How came Iſrael after the fleſh to be rejected?*

Anſ. His day of fleſh was out, and the day of ſpirit was come, wherein the ſpiritual glory (which was to ſucceed the ſhadows of the fleſhly) was to be ſet up; and ſo he not ſeeing that, nor entering into that, his own ſun ſet, and he hath abode in the darkneſs unto this day.

Queſt. *How came he not to ſee the ſpiritual glory?*

Anſ. Becauſe the eye of the fleſh was open in him; which eye cannot ſee it. He read the law in a gathered light, in the light of the earthly wiſdom, and not in the light of the ſpring from whence it came; and then how could he poſſibly underſtand the law aright? Could he then chooſe but ſet up the ſhadows of the law in the ſtead of the ſubſtance which was veiled therein? He read Moſes with the eye which can ſee but to the veil, and not to the glory which was revealed to Moſes, and which Moſes hid under the veil. And thus likewiſe he beheld the prophets, in the days

of

of their appearance; not in the light in which they appeared, but in the light of his own reaſon and imaginations; and upon this ground the Jews ſtill choſe and cried up the falſe prophets, but perſecuted the true. Now not ſeeing Moſes in ſpirit, nor the prophets in ſpirit, how could they ſee him who was greater than the prophets; he looking ſo contemptibly to the ſight of that eye wherewith they expected to ſee him? It is the Jew in ſpirit who alone can ſee and own the Meſſiah in ſpirit: yea, no fleſhly Jew could poſſibly diſcern him then, whoſe eternal life, light, and power, was hid under ſo mean a veil. He muſt be more than a Jew after the fleſh, who can own ſo much as the law, or any of the prophets in ſpirit; and then ſurely it can require no leſs than inward Jewſhip to diſcern the Meſſiah himſelf. They knew by the letter that then he was to come and appear; but they could not know by their obſervations from the letter which was he; but alone by the pointing of the finger of the Spirit, which they were unacquainted with.

Queſt. *What did they do to him, not ſeeing his glory?*

Anſ. They dealt with him as they had dealt with the prophets before him, diſdained him that he ſhould claim to be the Son of God, ſlighted him, reviled him, reproached him, preferred Moſes and the prophets above him (who all did but declare of him); yea, at laſt they preferred a thief and murderer before him, and put him to death after that manner that the prophets had foretold they would do.

Queſt. *Did the prophets foretell that the Jews would put the Meſſiah to death?*

Anſ. Yea, very manifeſtly, with the manner and circumſtances thereof. Daniel ſaid plainly that the Meſſiah ſhould be cut off; though not for himſelf, chap. ix. 26. Iſaiah ſhews the cauſe why he was cut off; to wit, "For the tranſgreſſion of my people was "the ſtroke upon him," chap. liii. 8. He was the Lamb without ſpot; there was no iniquity found in his heart, nor guile in his mouth; but he offered up his ſpotleſs ſoul (through the eternal Spirit) as a ranſom

ſom for the ſouls of tranſgreſſors, and with his bruiſe are they healed. David ſhews yet more particularly how he ſhould be cut off, "They pierced my hands "and my feet," Pſ. xxii. 16. And Zachary ſaith, that afterwards, in the days of their viſitation, "they "ſhall look on him whom they have pierced," chap. xii. 10. Was he not betrayed by one of his own table? Pſ. xli. 9. Did they not caſt lots for his garments, Pſ. xxii. 18. Was not gall alſo given him, and vinegar to drink? Pſ. lxix. 21. Were not his bones kept from being broken, according to the paſchal lamb, the type? Exod. xii. 46. Oh! that the Jews could read the words of their own prophets in the light of the prophets, and not in the light of man's imagination; and then they could not but bow before the ſpring and fountain of that light, as it was revealed in fleſh according to the ſcriptures, and ſee how that body was prepared for the light to ſhine in, and for it to do the will in, and to offer up the ſacrifice which God would have, that ſo an end might be put to all the ſacrifices and offerings which God would not have. Pſ. xl. 6. Dan. ix. 27.

Queſt. *What was to befall the Jews for refuſing the day of their viſitation by the Meſſiah, and for the putting of him to death?*

Anſ. They were to be caſt off, to become no people, their covenant to be broken, their glory turned into ſhame, their light ſet in obſcurity, their houſe made deſolate, and the hand of God purſuing this deſolate people, making them a ſcorn and reproach throughout all nations, Dan. ix. 27. And is not this come to paſs upon them? For what perſon hath been more hateful and hated than a Jew, who was once the glory and envy of all nations? Yea, hardneſs and blindneſs have ſo happened to them, that they cannot ſee the plaineſt things written in the prophets concerning the expiration of the day of Moſes with all his ſhadows, and the ſucceeding of the ſpiritual glory in the days of the Meſſiah; but their eyes and hearts

are

are ſtill blinded, and held captive in the figures of things.

Queſt. *Is there any ſcripture of the prophets which declareth that they ſhould be thus blind and hard?*

Anſ. The Spirit of the Lord in the prophet David (the beloved king, and figure of the Meſſiah) prayed for this righteous recompence to them. "Let their "table become a ſnare before them, and for welfare a "trap. Let their eyes be darkened that they ſee not, "&c. Let their habitation be deſolate," &c. Pſ. lxix. 22, &c. What is their table? Where and on what do they feed? Is it not on the writings of Moſes and the prophets? Now all the meanings, obſervations, and hopes which they gather from theſe (being under the curſe, and out of the Spirit of the prophets) cannot but be that ſnare and trap; and that which entangleth them deeply to this day is, their miſunderſtanding and miſinterpreting of Moſes and the prophets. *O Lord, my God, in the abundant riches of thy goodneſs, at length pity them, and let the fierceneſs of thine indignation abate towards them, and in thy love open their eyes, to ſee their ſtate, and what they have refuſed, and againſt whom they have lift up their heel, in their conceited wiſdom and knowledge, which they have gathered from Moſes and the prophets writings, that they may mourn after thee, and wait for thee in the way of thy redemption!*

Queſt. *How long is this deſolation and hardneſs to abide upon them?*

Anſ. Until God viſit them with his Spirit, and open their eyes to ſee his ſpiritual glory, and turn their hearts towards it. Then their outward expectations and deſires after an outward glorious kingdom will ſoon come to an end, and the Meſſiah will be known, owned, and received by them in Spirit; yet any outward glory that the Lord God ſees good for them, they ſhall not want neither. This the prophet Iſaiah plainly relates to the ear that is ſpiritual, chap. xxxii. 15. ("Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, "and the wilderneſs be a fruitful field, and the fruit-"ful field be counted for a foreſt") they muſt lie waſte,

waſte, until the Lord God pleaſe to let forth his Spirit upon them, to gather them into his ſpiritual glory: for the day of their outward glory did end, and a ſpiritual ſucceeded, which they are to be gathered into, when the days of their diſtreſs and tribulation are accompliſhed.

The Spirit was once poured down from on high on the diſciples of the Meſſiah, upon his aſcending into his glory, and the wilderneſs then became a fruitful field, and the fruitful field was accounted for a foreſt; but over that glory the defence was not ſo ſtretched forth, but that a night overtook that day, and the wild beaſts made a prey of that vineyard and fruitful field alſo, as well as of the former. But there is to be a more general pouring out of the Spirit, even upon all fleſh, and the wilderneſs is more generally to be viſited, and become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is more generally to be blaſted and made a foreſt; inſomuch as all fleſh every where ſhall appear graſs, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field, which ſhall fade and wither before the breath of God's Spirit. Then judgment ſhall dwell in the wilderneſs which is then viſited, and righteouſneſs ſhall remain in the field which is then made fruitful; and righteouſneſs ſhall be powerfully operative, working out the laſting peace; and the effect of it ſhall be "quietneſs and aſſurance "for ever." No more war, no more fighting with creatures, no more burdening and oppreſſing of the creation, no more ſinning and offending againſt the Creator, no more being diſpoſſeſſed of his life and glory; but the dwellings which God reareth up in the laſt days for Iſrael his people ſhall be peaceable habitations, ſure dwellings, and quiet reſting-places for evermore. O let Iſrael feel that which is able to awaken him, and wait for this!

Queſt. *How ſhall they be viſited and gathered?*

Anſ. By the new covenant, by the new law of the Meſſiah, which is to go forth out of the New Sion, and by the word of the Lord, which is to iſſue out of the New Jeruſalem: not by the covenant of Moſes

(their eyes may fail in hoping and looking out that way), but by the covenant of the Meſſiah, where the law of the life is written; not in tables of ſtone, or outward writings of the letter, but in the heart by the Spirit. There they ſhall be cleanſed by inward water, receive the inward circumciſion, and mark of the inward Jew; be ſprinkled with the everlaſting blood of the Lamb, and taught to offer up the ſpiritual ſacrifice, and ſhall hear the voice which will tell them of the way, and which will lead them in paths they have not known. There the ſpiritual ſeed, the ſpiritual Iſrael, ſhall find the Shepherd of Iſrael, who leads into the land of life, puts forth his ſheep into the paſtures of life, gives them of the living ſtreams to drink, begetting them as heirs of, and bringing them up in, the everlaſting power and dominion of the life.

Queſt. *How may old Iſrael enter into this path, and ſo become new Iſrael?*

Anſ. By waiting on the Lord for the cloſing of that eye which is wiſe according to the fleſh, and for the opening of that eye which is at firſt weak in ſpirit. There muſt be a low beginning: Iſrael muſt know and not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, if ever he will grow up into the riches and inheritance of this glory. There is a light in every heart at firſt, which gives a ſound in the natural veſſel, which is very hardly diſtinguiſhable from the natural, till (by obedience and ſubjection thereto) its living touch, virtue, and power comes to be felt and diſtinguiſhed; but in the meek, humble, believing, and obedient, it daily appears more and more, and makes itſelf more clearly manifeſt to them who are walking on unto the kingdom and inheritance in it, while others are diſputing about it.

Queſt. *How may Iſrael believe, and become ſubject to the light?*

Anſ. When there is a drawing felt in the heart, either to good, or againſt evil, he muſt not diſpute concerning it on the one hand, nor run on in the forwardneſs on the other (for both theſe ways the breathings

ings of the Spirit on him, and ſpringings up of the good ſeed in him, are eaſily quenched); but in the fear he is to truſt himſelf with what his heart certainly feels in the drawing virtue, and in the humility to give up the members to the good, and to withhold them from the evil, waiting for ſtrength from the fountain of ſtrength towards both. By this means there is a travel and removal out of the corruption and filth of the heart, into the pure holy law, nature, image, and will of God.

Queſt. *Where doth God find the heart, when he firſt viſiteth it with his light?*

Anſ. In Egypt, in the darkneſs, in the bonds and captivity of death.

Queſt. *What doth the Lord do with it there?*

Anſ. He exerciſeth it a while there, till he hath made it fit for a wilderneſs-ſtate.

Queſt. *What doth he do with it then?*

Anſ. He bringeth it into the wilderneſs which he hath fitted it for.

Queſt. *What doth he do with it in the wilderneſs?*

Anſ. He prepareth it for, and leadeth it towards, the land of life.

Queſt. *What doth he do with it then?*

Anſ. He giveth it an entrance into the everlaſting kingdom (which is the land of life) according as he hath prepared and fitted it. That which is new-begotten, new-created and formed, new-born in the Meſſiah's eternal light, findeth an entrance into, and a habitation in, the light, and is not turned back into the land of darkneſs; it abiding in the virtue and principle of its life, although ſometimes it may be exerciſed with the darkneſs for its further advantage. "Thou art our habitation from everlaſting to ever-"laſting," ſaith the child of light unto the Father of ſpirits, in all ages and generations.

Now that Iſrael after the fleſh may the better underſtand the path of the ſpiritual Iſrael in the way of redemption, by the powerful viſitations of the light of the Meſſiah in their hearts and conſciences, and may

know the gospel of his salvation, which is able to effect that which the law of Moses could not, because of the weakness of the flesh on their parts; let them in fear, and silence of the natural wisdom, and in waiting on the Lord in spirit, consider the Questions and Answers following, relating to spiritual Israel.

SOME

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS,

FOR THE

Direction, Comfort, Help, and Furtherance of GOD's Spiritual Israel, in their Travels in Spirit from Spiritual Egypt, through the Spiritual Wilderness, to Spiritual Canaan; which is the Land where the Redeemed Soul flourisheth in the Life, walking with GOD, and worshipping him in Spirit and Truth.

Quest. *WHAT is the gospel?*

Ans. A good message, or glad tidings to man, in the fallen estate, concerning a promise of redemption out of it.

Quest. *Is man then in a fallen estate?*

Ans. His present temper, constitution, disposition, and whole course, upon the least touch of God upon his spirit, do in some measure discover his fall unto him, through the insensibleness which is come upon him by his grievous wound; and death, through the fall, maketh him very unapt to take notice thereof.

Quest.

Queſt. *What was his eſtate before his fall?*

Anſ. A ſtate of glory and bleſſedneſs, wherein he came pure out of the hands of his Creator, was fitted for his uſe, ſervice, enjoyment, and delight, even for him to appear or diſappear in, and exerciſe according to his pleaſure.

Queſt. *Wherein did his glory and bleſſedneſs conſiſt?*

Anſ. Chiefly in theſe four things; to wit, in the light, in the life, in the liberty in which the veſſel was formed, and in the indwelling and appearing of the Creator there, according to his pleaſure.

Queſt. *Open this a little further.*

Anſ. Man was made a veſſel of light, a veſſel of life, a veſſel of pure freedom. He was formed in the eternal image, and had a pure being in that image. He was light in the Lord, living in the Lord, free unto all good, and from all evil, in the Lord. This was the ſtate of his being at firſt, and thus was he made in the image a pure reſemblance of the eternal purity and bleſſedneſs: but, beſides this, he had the eternal life, the eternal ſubſtance, the eternal purity itſelf dwelling in the veſſel, ſhining in it, and manifeſting itſelf from it according to its pleaſure.

Queſt. *How came man to fall from this eſtate?*

Anſ. Not willingly, not of an inclination of his own; but he was deceived, through the ſubtilty of temptation, to entertain a deſire of enlarging his bleſſedneſs, out of the limits of the will of his Creator.

Queſt. *How could ſuch a temptation enter man, he being pure and holy, inclined to good, and againſt evil, after the image of his Creator?*

Anſ. Man was not made to enjoy a perfection in himſelf ſeparate from his Creator, or to live of himſelf, but by dependence. Now though he had no inclination in him not to depend, or to ſeek a life in himſelf out of the fountain, yet there was a capacity of ſo doing: before which capacity the tempter laid his bait of advancing him to a greater wiſdom, glory, and excellency than his Creator had placed him in; with which he conſulting out of the dependence upon

his Creator, fell from that which alone was able to uphold him in the pure ſtate wherein he was made. Thus was he taken in the ſnare of miſery, and brought to that loſs which all the ſons of Adam lie grovelling under to this day, when the Lord at any time awakens the ſenſe thereof in them.

Queſt. *What was the ſtate of man in and ſince the fall?*

Anſ. A ſtate of darkneſs, a ſtate of death, a ſtate of deep captivity, wherein his ſoul, body, and ſpirit are become dark as to the light of God, dead as to the life of righteouſneſs, and captive unto that ſpirit which hath entered them by their hearkening thereto, who dwelleth and ruleth in them in the darkneſs, as God did before in the light.

Queſt. *How is man dark? How is man dead? Is his ſoul or body dead as to their being? Or how elſe is it?*

Anſ. Man is not dead as to his being either in ſoul or body, but as to the right, pure, and ſanctified ſtate of each. The veſſels ſtill remain the ſame in being; but they are emptied of their proper liquor, and filled with other wine. The underſtanding is the ſame, the reaſon the ſame, the will the ſame, the memory the ſame, the bodily members the ſame, as to their being or matter; but they are all otherwiſe leavened, and another king now dwells in them, and reigns over them.

Queſt. *Then there needs not any diſſolution of man's reaſon, or bringing it to nothing, in relation to man's recovery; but only a changing of the leaven.*

Anſ. Man is become another thing by degeneration from the life. He is ſo poiſoned by ſin and corruption, that he is to be wholly broken down and brought to nothing, even in the very naturals, that he may be new-made and built up in the newneſs of the Spirit. Thus he is to become as a fool, as a little child, or rather as a ſeed to be caſt into the womb of life, there to be formed and born of the Spirit. And as he ſprings up in the life, he is to forget his own country, living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit; where watching

watching to the Spirit, and againſt his own reaſon in the pure childiſhneſs, in the ſimple inſtinct and naturalneſs of the life, he ſhall at length find a reaſon new-formed and ſpringing up in him; which waiting on the Lord in obedience and ſubjection, ſhall be taken into unity with the life. But if the eye of reaſon open too faſt, and be not kept down to the light of life, the betrayer will enter again at that door, and bring the ſoul into death, after it hath had ſweet and precious taſtes of the redeeming virtue and power.

Queſt. *Can man in the fall ſee his fallen eſtate, and ſo ſeek after a recovery out of it?*

Anſ. It is not poſſible for him ſo to do, without ſome light ſhining upon him from the Redeemer. How can darkneſs diſcover darkneſs? That which maketh manifeſt the darkneſs is light. When the veſſel is dark, and the prince of darkneſs filleth it, and dwelleth in it, what can that eye ſee but according to the darkneſs, judging evil good, and good evil, bitter ſweet, and ſweet bitter.

Queſt. *But there is no man but hath ſome light; no man but at ſome time or other ſeeth good or evil in ſome meaſure.*

Anſ. That ariſeth not from the light of man's nature, as it now ſtands in the fall, (which being wholly in the enemy's hands, and being itſelf become darkneſs, cannot at all give man notice of, or light him out of, the darkneſs) but from a freſh viſitation of the life, which giveth all men a day of viſitation by the ſhining of its light, wherein is ſome manifeſtation to man, and ſome certain ſight by him both of the good and of the evil; and not only ſo, but there is alſo the living Spirit ſtriving with him, and attracting him from the one to the other, according to the Lord's good pleaſure, who is both the light, and alſo the determination of the proportion of every man's viſitation by it.

Queſt. *But hath not man naturally a light in the fallen eſtate, which diſcovereth unto him good and evil?*

Anſ. Not a true light, not a true diſcovery; but only ſomewhat which the enemy ſetteth up in man as ſuch, to keep him in the intanglements of the deceit, and out of the ſuſpicion of it. For the enemy entering into him, by his ſubtilty blindeth and deceiveth his eye, (that he may the better hold him captive in the deceit) inſomuch as he diſcerneth not the falſe image which the enemy hath ſtamped upon him: for though the enemy bringeth man into a ſtate of real darkneſs, death, and captivity; yet theſe do not at preſent appear to man what they are, but are miſcoloured, or painted, to appear what they are not, the better to deceive, bewitch, and entangle man therein. The enemy did not repreſent darkneſs in its black hue; death and captivity in its dreadful appearance to Adam; but as wiſdom, as light, as a better life, as a greater freedom. And thus he ſtill enters man, and after this manner he ſtill dwells in man, until the true light purſue him, opening and diſcovering his deceit, and drawing man back from this falſe paradiſe of pleaſure in wiſdom and liberty out of the life, into a ſenſe of his want of, and breathings after, the true garden of the living God.

Queſt. *Is man then miſtaken in his judgment of good and evil ſince the fall?*

Anſ. Yes, altogether; and by this means doth he ſo pleaſingly ſituate himſelf, and take up his habitation in the kingdom of darkneſs, wherein are ſtrongholds and wiſe reaſonings againſt the true God, and for the falſe appearances of good, which the enemy of the ſoul ſtrongly makes men believe to be ſuch as he repreſents them for in the darkneſs. Thus in particular perſons, and alſo in ſocieties, evil is purſued after, and advanced for good, and the true good ſuppreſſed as evil, through the working of the myſtery of darkneſs in mens hearts.

Queſt. *What then is the proper eſtate and condition of man in the fall?*

Anſ. A ſtate of falſe light, of falſe life, of falſe liberty. He ſeemeth to himſelf advanced in wiſdom above

above the low, empty, naked eſtate of innocency' which is nothing, and hath nothing, but by a continual dependence on the goodneſs of the Creator. He ſeemeth alſo advanced in life, advanced in liberty; he can ſpeak his own words, think his own thoughts, do his own will, ſeek himſelf, pleaſe himſelf, ſatisfy himſelf. The life of righteouſneſs is a yoke, a bond, in his eye; he is free from the reſtraint of it; he hath life in himſelf, and is exceeding wiſe in the compaſs of his own dominions. Thus doth the enemy tranſform the kingdom of darkneſs and death, giving fallen man a ſhare with him in it, while he remains his willing ſubject. And here the goods of the enemy, the heart eſtranged from God, yea, not only the devout and zealous worſhipper in invented forms, but alſo the groſs ſinner, the envious, luſtful, and wicked mind, the perverſe tongue, the bloody hands and feet, are at peace, and have joy and pleaſure in their courſe and circuit in the earth. But all this is but the deceit of the enemy, wherewith he hath cheated man with falſe appearances and repreſentations inſtead of the true, as man himſelf will ſee, whenever the eye of his ſoul comes to be thoroughly awakened by the eternal light, whether here or hereafter.

Queſt. *What is the work of redemption?*

Anſ. To purge the old leaven out of the veſſel, to purify the veſſel from all the falſe appearances of light, to batter down all the ſtrong-holds of the enemy in the mind, all the reaſonings, thoughts, imaginations, and conſultations, which are not of the pure, or in the pure; and ſo to new-create and new-form the veſſel in the image of the wiſdom and purity wherein it was at firſt formed.

Queſt. *Who doth this work, or who is man's redeemer out of the fall?*

Anſ. The Eternal Word or Son of the Father, even the wiſdom and power which went forth from the fountain in the creation, the ſame goeth forth from the boſom of the Father to purify the creature, and ſo bringeth

bringeth the creature back (being purified and cleanſed) into his boſom again.

Queſt. *With what doth this Word, or Redeemer, redeem?*

Anſ. With his own life, with his own blood, with his own eternal virtue and purity. He deſcendeth into the lower parts of the earth, becomes fleſh there, ſows his own ſeed in his prepared earth, begets of his fleſh and of his bone, in his own likeneſs, and nouriſheth up his birth with his fleſh and blood unto life everlaſting.

Queſt. *What is this life? Or how doth it firſt manifeſt itſelf in the darkneſs?*

Anſ. It is the light of men. It is that which gave light to Adam at firſt, again to him after the fall, and to all men ſince the fall. It enlightens in nature; it enlightened under the law; it did enlighten under the goſpel before the apoſtaſy, and again ſince the apoſtaſy.

Queſt. *How doth the light enlighten?*

Anſ. By its ſhining. The eternal Word moves, the life opens, the light ſhines: this in the leaſt degree is a beginning of redemption; in its fulneſs it is redemption perfected.

Queſt. *How doth the light work redemption in its ſhining?*

Anſ. Two ways: firſt, by turning the heart from the darkneſs towards itſelf; ſecondly, by exerciſing the heart, being turned.

Queſt. *How doth it turn the heart from the darkneſs?*

Anſ. The light, by its ſhining and enlightening, findeth out its own, openeth it, and toucheth it with a ſecret virtue, which perſuades out of, and draws the heart from, the principle and power of death and darkneſs, towards its own native ſpring.

Queſt. *May not theſe drawings be quenched, and the work of God ſtopped?*

Anſ. The plant of the Lord is exceeding tender, his pure Spirit jealous, the enemy very ſtrong and ſubtil; inſomuch as the plant itſelf may eaſily be

cruſhed,

cruſhed, the Spirit grieved and quenched, and the captivity redoubled.

Queſt. *If Adam was betrayed in his full ſtrength, how ſhall this poor weak plant ſpring up and grow, without being ſupplanted by the violence and treachery of the enemy? Or how ſhall the grieving of the Spirit be avoided by an heart ſo full of corruption and provocations, as man in the alienated ſtate is, when the light firſt viſits him?*

Anſ. The Lord God is nigh to help, nigh to pity, nigh to pardon, nigh to watch over and ſupport worm Jacob: yea, nigh to revive life and ſpirit in him freely, and to heal his backſlidings, and multiply pardons, or it could never be. Yea, the creature can never be brought ſo low, or ſo far loſt, but there is ſtill help in the nature of God concerning him, though there may not be help in any revealed promiſe.

Queſt. *How doth God exerciſe the heart which is turned?*

Anſ. In faith and obedience, through very great varieties and changes of conditions. He exerciſeth it in believing his voice, and in obeying his voice, and following him, in whatever, and into whatſoever, he draws and requires.

Queſt. *How is the voice of God known? Doth not the enemy ſpeak inwardly alſo, and reſemble his voice? How then is the voice of the Redeemer diſtinguiſhed from him who counterfeiteth the Shepherd and his voice?*

Anſ. By theſe two means:

Firſt, The ſoul lying low, out of the wiſdom in which the enemy appears and forms his likeneſſes; in the ſimplicity which the Lord hath begotten, the life opens to it, and the true light appears, which manifeſts the falſe light, and falſe appearances of the deceiver.

Secondly, In that which is begotten of God there is not an haſtineſs or ſuddenneſs to determine; but a ſilent waiting on the Lord in ſubjection, till the life ſpeak, and make things manifeſt. Thus the knowledge and light of the child is held in the will of the Father, and received from his hand, and according to his

his pleaſure. Thus what he will he hides, and what he will he makes manifeſt; and the child, which is born of his will, is content with his will; and lying down there, it keeps out of the enemy's territories, and of the reach of his temptations.

Queſt. *What are the ſeveral eſtates or conditions wherein God exerciſeth the ſpirit of man in faith and obedience?*

Anſ. The particular eſtates and conditions are innumerable; but they may be referred to theſe three general heads: Firſt, An eſtate of breaking down the former building. Secondly, An eſtate of devaſtation or preparation to be new built. Thirdly, An eſtate of rebuilding. God doth not forget, but exerciſe his people in Egypt, even while they are in bondage, before they come to receive his law. He is viſiting them in the dark land, opening the eye that can ſee the captivity, cauſing groans and ſighs in their oppreſſed ſpirits, and then holding forth to them the promiſe, and preparing them for a departure from that land. Secondly, He hath a time of ſtripping them, of nurturing and bringing them up under his diſcipline and cloſe exerciſes, wherein they are deſolate, and ready to ſin and periſh every moment; but as they are wonderfully provided for, and abundantly helped and pardoned. Thirdly, There is a ſtate of rebuilding the ſtones, when they are prepared therefore, into a new building for the life to dwell in, and for their entrance into the land of life.

Queſt. *Declare theſe eſtates, and the exerciſes therein more plainly; and firſt ſhew what is the eſtate of the ſoul in Egypt ſpiritually, when the Lord viſiteth it there with his light?*

Anſ. An eſtate of deep bondage and groaning under the powers of darkneſs, whoſe bitter oppreſſions thereof increaſe, even as the ſenſibleneſs and tiredneſs of the ſoul increaſes. The ſoul then ſees its captivity from the life, and finds a building of death and corruption raiſed up in it, in which the prince of darkneſs dwells and bears rule: and then, oh! how it groans and longs after departure from that land, and waits

waits for the promiſe of redemption out of it! But yet it is ſtill left in the hand of the enemy, and daily feels the bitter bondage, from the powerful law of ſin and death ſpringing up in the heart, and iſſuing out through the members.

Queſt. *How is faith and obedience here exerciſed?*

Anſ. In believing the promiſe, in waiting for the promiſe, in feeling ſome remote drawings of the life, and uniting therewith, ſo far as is poſſible in this dark captivated eſtate. There is an acknowledgment of the true prince, and a bowing to him even in this eſtate of captivity, until he pleaſe to break the bands thereof, and receive under his guidance.

Queſt. *What is the eſtate of the wilderneſs ſpiritually?*

Anſ. It is an eſtate of waiting for the guidance of the leader; of receiving direction and laws from the leader; of following the leader as he pleaſeth to lead, through the entanglements, temptations, ſtraits, and neceſſities which he ſeeth fit to exerciſe the ſpirit with, for the wearing out of that which is not to inherit, and for preparing the heir for the inheritance.

Queſt. *How is faith and obedience here exerciſed?*

Anſ. In waiting on the light for the leadings in the law of life, and then in ſubjecting to the leader, being content with all his diſpenſations therein; with the time he chooſeth for ſtanding ſtill, and with the time he chooſeth for travelling on; with the proportion of light and leading that he judgeth fit, with the food and clothing which he prepares and preſerves; with the enemies which he ſees fit to have avoided or encountered with. Hereby the own wiſdom, the own will, the own ſtrength, the own deſires, the own delights; with all the murmurings, wearineſs, and diſcontents, which ariſe from the earthly part, are by degrees worn out, and a pure veſſel prepared for the pure birth to ſpring up and appear in.

Queſt. *What is ſpiritual Canaan, or the heavenly-built ſtate, or ſtate of the goſpel?*

Anſ. A ſtate of regenerating or renewing in the life and pure image; where the building is reared up which

which is made without hands; where there is a ſweet and peaceable growth in the life, and a freſh and ſatisfactory enjoyment of the life.

Queſt. *How is faith and obedience here exerciſed?*

Anſ. In abiding in the vine, in drawing from the vine, in returning the ſap and virtue back into the vine; and living according to the will and in the free diſpenſation thereof. Thus works are excluded, with ſelf, from whom they proceed, and the vine becomes all in all.

Queſt. *Are Egypt, with the wilderneſs and Cannan, ſpiritually, as diſtinct eſtates as they were literally?*

Anſ. There are ſuch diſtinct ſeveral eſtates ſpiritually, wherein a man may be ſpiritually in Egypt, and neither in the wilderneſs nor Canaan. So there is an eſtate in the wilderneſs, which is out of Egypt, and not in Canaan; and an eſtate in Canaan, which is beyond both Egypt and the wilderneſs. Yet theſe eſtates in ſpirit are oftentimes interwoven, with the exerciſes thereof; inſomuch as the ſoul may in part, or in ſome reſpect (to his own underſtanding) be in Egypt; in part in the wilderneſs, and in part in the reſt, life, and peace. But theſe things are not to be curiouſly ſought into, leſt a wrong wiſdom and a knowledge get up; but abiding low and little in the little ſeed, the kingdom and everlaſting inheritance grows daily in the ſoul, and the ſoul daily ſhoots up into it, and is enlarged in it.

Queſt. *Is there any return back into Egypt, or into the wilderneſs, after the ſtate of the ſoul is advanced higher; the entrance into the everlaſting inheritance being adminiſtered, and the ſoul partly taken into, and having found a place of reſt in, the life?*

Anſ. The enemy lies near to deceive; and while he hath power to tempt, if there be an hearkening to his temptations, there is a departure from the pure life, and a return of the captivity or bewildering in ſome meaſure. In the faith and in the obedience to the light of life is the preſervation; out of it is death and deſtruction eternally.

Queſt.

Queſt. *Is not the Pure Being untouched by death and deſtruction? And ſhall not the creature, when it is redeemed into him, be as he is?*

Anſ. The Pure Being cannot be impure, evil cannot enter upon him, it hath no place in him, his nature excluding it; nor can it enter into the principle of life that comes from him, and is always preſerved by him; nor can it enter upon that man who is begotten of that principle, abideth with it, and is preſerved in it. But ſo to be in him, as to abide and not go forth, is a great ſtate, even higher than the firſt Adam knew.

Queſt. *But is not light and darkneſs, good and evil, all alike to God? And ſhall they not be ſo alſo to him, who is in perfect unity and fellowſhip with God?*

Anſ. All the light and darkneſs, good and evil, which can iſſue from the creature, cannot reach God's being as it is in itſelf, but only ſo far as he hath pleaſed to expoſe his life (in the various manifeſtations thereof) to be reached thereby. Yet his eye ſeeth the evil and the good; the perfection and the imperfection, and his nature is perfectly excluded from all evil and imperfection, inſomuch as he cannot poſſibly lie or deceive, or be unrighteous or unmerciful in any of his diſpenſations; and that which is gathered into him, is thus one with him. But that which can do any thing which is ſinful and evil in itſelf, is not in the true unity with the eternal being, but in the deceit of that ſpirit which erreth from him, and entereth the creature in the imagined likeneſs of his life and happineſs.

Queſt. *How far may perſons go, and yet be liable to the enemy's ſnare?*

Anſ. Very far. They may come out of Egypt; they may paſs through the wilderneſs; they may receive an inheritance or portion in the holy land; they may have houſes and vineyards which they builded not, nor planted; they may have had deep draughts of the life, deep incomes of the love, large riches of the grace, and precious taſtes of the fulneſs. They may have been in the paradiſe of God; may have been anointed

anointed by God; may have ſtood upon his holy mountain, and walked up and down in the midſt of the ſtones of fire, &c. and yet the enemy may have leave to tempt, and may find entrance for his temptation; advancing above his eſtate in the deceivableneſs, and increaſing the glory in the eye of the wiſdom which he ſteals in; and ſo hold the ſpirit captive in his golden chains, and lead it back again to the chambers of death.

Queſt. *How doth, or can, the enemy prevail over perſons in ſo glorious an eſtate?*

Anſ. By opening a larger eye in them, than is given them in the life to ſee with. The eye of life is limited in man, and man is to be held within the limits and openings of life; and his heart and mind to be bounded within the deſires and delights which ariſe from the life: he is to wait on the life, for its living, moving, and being all in his being: and here he ſhall be large enough, and full enough, and wiſe enough, and happy enough. But there is ſomewhat which preſents to him a kingdom, a riches, a dominion, a vaſtneſs of perfection in himſelf, and at his own command; the which he beginning to liſten unto, the ſame opens an eye in him to ſee the beauty and glory thereof, and then immediately his heart is taken, and he cannot avoid the ſnare; nor can he henceforth know where he is, until that which he hath forſaken again pleaſe to viſit him, and to diſcover to him his iniquity and error from the true root.

Queſt. *What is the way of ſafety, when God enlargeth the territories of life in the ſoul, and cauſeth his love and grace to abound?*

Anſ. To drink the draughts of joy and ſweetneſs in the pure fear and trembling; not departing therefrom in whatever it doth for God, or receives from him, till the ſalvation be wholly wrought out and perfected, the habitation of unſpotted love prepared, and the ſoul led into, and ſeated in, its complete manſion therein. And then the name of fear is no more heard of in the land of life; though the princi-

ple

ple from whence the fear ſprang, and the birth and building (which was begotten, raiſed up, formed, and perfected in the fear) abideth for ever. So that the pure love doth not caſt out the pure fear, (wherein is no bondage of the life, but the preſervation of the life from the bondage) but ſwallows it up and comprehends it. For the pure fear is but love deſcended, and the pure love is but fear aſcended; the eternal principle or ſubſtance being one and the ſame in both.

Queſt. *Is there then ſuch a ſtate of ſafety, upon which the enemy cannot intrench?*

Anſ. There is a ſtate of ſuch union with the life, as the enemy cannot come between; where there is lying down and riſing up in the power of the life, and no beaſt of prey can make afraid any more; nor can any root of bitterneſs ſpring up from within, to trouble or make any diſturbance between the life and the ſoul any more.

SOME

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS,

CONDUCING TOWARDS

The further Manifeſtation and Opening of the Path of Redemption and Eternal Life to the Eye of Spiritual ISRAEL.

Queſt. HOW *doth the Son of God, or Eternal Word, in whom is the light of life, redeem man out of the fallen eſtate, out of the kingdom of darkneſs and death, into the kingdom of everlaſting righteouſneſs and peace in the life?*

Anſ. Three ways. Firſt, By wounding him in the natural and corrupt eſtate, and ſo breaking his peace and pleaſure in the kingdom of darkneſs, and making him weary thereof. Secondly, By weakening him under the teachings and chaſtiſement of the law. Thirdly, By healing and binding him up with the oil of ſalvation, in the power of the endleſs life, which is the goſpel.

Queſt. *How doth God wound him in the natural and corrupt ſtate?*

Anſ. By purſuing him with his light, which letteth him ſee what it is, diſcovering the evil and danger of it, and ſo weaning his heart from it, and making him look out after and long for a redeemer. Oh! how burdenſome is the captivity to the awakened ſoul, when he hath a glimpſe of what man was before his fall, (when he had a place and being in the life, with a ſpirit ſuitable to the life) and what he is now in his eſtate of eſtrangedneſs and alienation from the life; and whither he is going in his paths of unrighteouſneſs, eſtrangedneſs, and alienation! And while his heart is thus returning from the land of death and captivity, and longing after the redeeming power and virtue of the life, the enemy (the power of darkneſs) lays loads upon him, drawing him more and more under the chains and bonds of iniquity, to the utmoſt of its ſtrength. So that now luſts abound, evils increaſe, temptations and ſnares multiply; and in the land of captivity their ſtrength is great, the ſoul weak and faint, and the redeeming power and virtue ſeems very far off. Now this is the eſtate of converſion; when the Lord, in the midſt of the powers of death and darkneſs, turns the heart from them towards himſelf, cauſing it to wait (under the captivity) for the appearance of the arm of his ſtrength, to break the yoke of the oppreſſor from off the necks of the oppreſſed, and ſo to bring out of the land of death and darkneſs, into the travels towards the land of promiſe; where the peace, the life, the liberty in the Lord, the reſt, the joy, the full

full content and happineſs is reaped by the ſoul, which follows the Lamb thither.

Queſt. *How doth God weaken the creature under the teachings and chaſtiſements of the law?*

Anſ. By exerciſing him towards good and evil, and correcting him for his unbelief and diſobedience, as he finds good, juſt, and neceſſary for him.

Queſt. *How doth God exerciſe him towards good and evil, and correct him?*

Anſ. When he hath brought him from under the power of darkneſs in ſome meaſure; and in ſome meaſure ſet the ſpirit free therefrom, by the virtue of his life ſpringing up in the heart, then he exerciſeth the heart and converſation towards the good and from the evil; then he giveth out laws for or againſt things, according as he findeth moſt proper to the eſtate of every particular ſoul. Now upon the giving forth of the law, (the life being in ſome meaſure raiſed) there is that which loves its teachings and pure path, and there is that alſo which draws back from it; and that being yet ſtrong, there come many ſtrokes and chaſtiſements from the Lord, upon his own dear child. And theſe are bitter; and to be forced into the ſin which it lothes, and in heart is turned from; and to be kept from the good which it longs after, and in heart is united to, (partly by the ſtrength of the enemy, and partly by reaſon of its own weakneſs and negligence) this is bitter alſo; inſomuch as it crieth out day after day, and findeth this adminiſtration of the law almoſt as heavy a yoke as the land of captivity itſelf was, becauſe of the weakneſs of it through the fleſh, and the ſtrength and advantages which the corruption of the heart and prince of darkneſs gather thereby.

Queſt. *What is the benefit of theſe exerciſes upon the ſoul?*

Anſ. They melt, they break, they make the heart tender and fit to be moulded by the eternal virtue and power, into a veſſel for the power.

Queſt. *What frames of ſpirit do they work the heart or mind into?*

Anſ. Into very many precious ones. As for inſtance,

Firſt, *They make the ſpirit poor.* The daily inroads of ſin and corruption daſhing againſt the holy and righteous law of life, the overbearing the ſtrong deſires after purity, and forcing into the defilement, hindering the ſoul from doing what it loves, and making it do what it hates and would not, this makes it become poorer and poorer, and more afflicted day by day. Upon ſome viſitations of the pure life, and ſome freſh virtue received, oh! how ſtrong doth the ſoul ſeem! but when it ſuddenly forfeits its mercies, loſes its freſhneſs, and is plunged deeper in the pit than before, how poor and weak doth it then feel itſelf, trembling at the next openings of the life, and ſpringings up of the virtue thereof in it, not knowing what weakneſs, captivity, entanglements, and miſery from the ſnares of death remain to follow!

Secondly, *They bring into a mourning eſtate.* They fill the eyes with tears, and the heart with ſorrow; yea, they cauſe an entrance into *the houſe of mourning.* To be accuſtomed to wounds, bruiſes, ſnares, grieving of the Spirit, provoking of the deliverer, furthering and giving advantages to the enemy, &c. the ſenſe of this overwhelms the heart with grief, and cauſeth continual ſorrow and lamentation to that which is upright towards God.

Thirdly, *They bring into a meek, merciful, tender-hearted frame towards others.* He that is tempted, he that often falls, and is ſo often wounded and made miſerable, he pities thoſe that err; he mourns over the miſerable. His heart is broken with the ſins and afflictions of others, and he knoweth not how to be hard towards them, feeling ſuch continual need of abundant mercy himſelf. It is the rich man, the ſound man in religion, that is rough and hard; but he that is once thoroughly melted in the furnace, and made up again, is made but tender, and retaineth the impreſſion

preſſion of the meekneſs, love, and mercy for ever. Now a broken eſtate in religion, or a ſtate of waiting for the life, is much more precious than that which is rich and full by what it had formerly received, and ſtill holdeth out of the immediate feeling and freſh virtue of the life.

Fourthly, *They bring into an hungry and thirſty ſtate after holineſs and righteouſneſs.* Oh! how the ſoul that is ſenſible of its filth longeth to be waſhed! How it panteth after the paſtures of life, the food of life, the living waters; to appear before, and enjoy God, in the land of the living! Oh! how doth the heart, that is daily afflicted with its unbelief and diſobedience, long for the faith that ſtands in the power, and the obedience that flows from the power. "Oh! teach "me thy ſtatutes; ſhew me the pure path of obe- "dience in the way of life; guide my feet in the way "everlaſting! Oh! write thy fear in my heart, that "I may not depart from thee; create a clean heart in "me, and put thy Spirit within me to be my "ſtrength. Oh! continue thy loving-kindneſs to "them that know thee, and thy righteouſneſs to the "upright in heart." Oh! what unutterable breathings daily iſſue out from the broken ſpirit, towards the ſpring of its life!

Fifthly, *They bring into a pure frame,* into a cleanneſs of inſide. "Cleanſe firſt the inſide of the cup "and platter," ſaid Chriſt to the Phariſees; and he doth ſo in his diſciples. "With the mind I ſerve "the law of God," ſaid Paul, when he cried out, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver?" It is not conceivable what purity of heart is formed by God in his Iſrael, by the fire which he kindleth in his Sion, and by the furnace which he ſetteth up in his Jeruſalem; for though in the furnace the droſs ſtill appears, the ſight whereof is apt to grieve and afflict the precious heart, yet the melting and purifying ſweetly goes on, and the ſoul (which abideth the heat) is effectually cleanſed thereby, as is very manifeſt afterwards, when righteouſneſs ſprings up,

with the quiet fruit thereof; but this cannot be discerned, while the flames are discovering and taking hold of the unrighteousness.

Sixthly, *They bring into a patient frame*; fit to bear reproaches and persecutions from the world, who in the midst of all this weakness, misery, and distress, lay loads upon the poor soul, persecuting him whom God hath smitten, and speaking to the grief of him whom God hath wounded. God smites for want of obedience; for too much propensity to please the world; for not coming soon enough out of their customs, vanities, earthly ways and worships; and so soon as the heart and conversation is given up in obedience to the Lord, the world is discontent, and they smite and persecute because of the obedience. Now the more the spirit is broken by the hand of the Lord, and taught thereby to fear him; and the less strength it hath in itself, to grapple with the persecuting spirit of the world; the fitter it is to stand in God's counsel, to wait for his strength and preservation, which is able to bear up its head above all the rage and swelling of the waters of the worldly spirit in the men of this world.

Much more might be said, but this may suffice. What is behind will be felt inwardly, as the soul waits on God in the leadings of his Spirit, through the teachings, chastisements, and distresses of the law.

Quest. *With what kind of things doth the Lord exercise the spirits of his Israel, to bring their hearts into these and such other like precious frames?*

Ans. With several sorts and kinds of things, both outward and inward. As,

First, With oppositions, reproaches, and interruptions from the earthly part, both in the men of this world, and in themselves. There is abundance within, and abundance without, to resist, disdain, and interrupt the work of God in the heart, to oppose and withstand that which he hath begotten there; his leadings of it, and its obedience to him.

Secondly,

Secondly, With temptations from the enemy, even of many kinds, natures, and degrees, according to the preſent temper and condition of the ſoul; as either to doubt, and ſo deſpair; or be confident in the fleſh from knowledge received, out of the pure fear and freſh feeling of the life; ſo again, either to halt or draw back, or to be over-haſty and forward; ſo likewiſe, either not to obey and act for God, or to act in that will and wiſdom which is againſt God. Now theſe, with ſuch-like, are very numerous, frequent, and ſometimes very violent and impetuous.

Thirdly, By withdrawings of the life and ſweet preſence of God from the ſoul. Theſe are very frequent from the Lord towards his people, inſomuch as he is called by this title; "The God that hideth his face "from the houſe of Jacob," Iſa. viii. 17. chap. xlv. 15.

Fourthly, By buffetings and prevailings of the enemy. When the Spirit is grieved, the life wounded, and withdraws inward, the enemy often gets ground, giving wounds and cauſing bruiſes to the ſoul; not only tempting, but finding entrance, and taking in the ſnare the bird which once eſcaped, and was delivered.

Fifthly, By doubts, fears, and confuſed reaſonings concerning the voice of God and the voice of the enemy. In the hour of darkneſs (when the Lord ſeeth good to let forth the power thereof, and to withdraw the beams of his light) how can that be clearly diſtinguiſhed, which alone is known and ſeen in the light? How can the motions, drawings, and pure low workings of the life, be diſcerned from the falſe images and transformings of the enemy? Oh! the miſery and anguiſh of the poor ſoul in this condition! how is the poor upright heart pained between faith and unbelief, obedience and diſobedience, &c. not knowing when it is drawn forward or backward, or by whom.

Queſt. *When do theſe exerciſes begin? and how long do they continue?*

Anſ. The Lord doth begin to exerciſe the ſoul even in Egypt; for after the promiſe (of deliverance from ſpiritual Pharaoh) the bonds increaſe, the yoke grows more heavy, Pharaoh grows more violent and furious, the captivity increaſeth much; but there is no ſight of redemption at all, ſave to that eye which is weak, and eaſily overborne in Iſrael. But the exerciſes are much more full and ſharp in the wilderneſs, where Iſrael is led about, tried, afflicted, conſumed day by day, as if he ſhould never come to the holy land, nor any of Iſrael be left to enter therein. Yea, in Canaan, in the rich poſſeſſion, in the plenteous overflowings of the life, there is ſtill ſomewhat left to try Iſrael, and bring him low with, if at any time he be exalted with the glory and fulneſs of his own eſtate, and begin to forget his God.

Queſt. *Why doth God thus exerciſe his Iſrael? Why doth he lead them in ſuch a knotty, and not in a more eaſy and ready way to the everlaſting poſſeſſion, and to the fulneſs thereof?*

Anſ. Becauſe their eſtate and condition requires it. They could not be ſo purified and fitted for the life; their veſſels would not be ſo inlarged to receive it in, nor they ſo ſafely enjoy it, were it not for this courſe of wiſdom, wherein God exerciſes and trieth every cranny of their ſpirits, until he hath perfected them, and ſtopped up the entrance of death every where.

Queſt. *How do theſe exerciſes purify and enlarge them?*

Anſ. Firſt, They try the ſtrength and virtue of the life in them, and diſcover to them their further want thereof. In the time of the ſoul's proſperity there ſeems to be enough; but the day of diſtreſs maketh manifeſt the eſtate and condition as it is. Then the faith, the love, the patience, the meekneſs, the conſtancy, and chaſteneſs to the ſpouſe (loving him, and cleaving to him above all, and in all) many times is found to be leſs than it was judged to be.

Secondly, It brings to a waiting on God for ſupport, and for receiving of more from him. Then the life breathes vigorouſly, and the ſoul hankers after, cleaves

cleaves to, and ſees its need both of the preſence and increaſe of the virtue of the life. Then he that was rich becomes poor, and he that was full becomes empty and nothing; yea, he that had enough to live on and to ſpare, is now preſſed with hunger, want, and penury.

Thirdly, It prepares for a clearer entrance into, and ſafer enjoyment of, the fulneſs. As the ſoul is more emptied of the ſtrength and riches it received from God; ſo it is more prepared to enter into, and live in the Pure Being itſelf. For nothing can live there which veils. In the life God was, and is, and is to be all in all for ever. That, therefore, which enters there, and lives and abides there, muſt be poor, empty, naked, nothing, and remain nothing for ever. As it gathers any thing from the fulneſs, and becomes any thing in itſelf, thereby it is ſhut out.

Queſt. *How doth God heal and bind up that which he hath wounded and broken to pieces with his various and frequent exerciſes?*

Anſ. By opening the power of the endleſs life, in the veſſel which he hath thoroughly purified and prepared, and filling it with the power. The free power of life, that is the goſpel. To the meek, to the broken-hearted, to the cleanſed it is propheſied; and when the work of cleanſing is finiſhed, the wound made wide enough, and kept open long enough, and the death to the firſt huſband fully accompliſhed, then the perfect oil is perfectly poured in, and everlaſting health and ſalvation obtained. This is the end which God aims at in the viſitations and leadings of his ſeed; happy are they that paſs through the vale of miſery, and drink off the dregs of the *cup of trembling*, not fainting nor ſitting down by the way, but following the faithful Shepherd and Leader of Iſrael, till they arrive here.

Queſt. *What is the great danger in the path of life?*

Anſ. The great danger is of aſcending a ſtep higher than the preſent eſtate and condition will bear; for by this means the aſpiring mind gets up, and is exalted,

alted, and holdeth ſomewhat received from the life, out of the pure fear which preſerves the heart clean, and out of the ſenſible feeling which keepeth freſh and living to God. And then the ſimplicity is betrayed, and a wrong ſpirit lives, and a wrong eye is opened; ſo that there is nothing now but whoredom from the life, and the heart exalted and conceited in the way of its whoredom, as if it were the pure bed and moſt excellent way of enjoyment of the life.

Queſt. *What way is there of preſervation herefrom?*

Anſ. Watching to the life, keeping low in the fear, and cloſe to the feeling. Here the aſpirer is ſhut out, or ſoon eſpied at his beginning to enter, and then the living croſs received, which crucifieth and driveth him back. And indeed there is no way of ſafety in the travels towards the enjoyment of life, or under any enjoyment before the ſtate of perfect death, but under the croſs to that ſpirit and nature which would dwell there, and pleaſe itſelf therewith, and be ſomewhat therein, and ſo forget the pure everlaſting ſpring, adulterating with the ſtreamings forth of it.

Man was made for God to be a veſſel of his pleaſure, to receive his content, enjoyment, and happineſs by reflexion. So that man's proper work was to watch to the ſpring from whence he came; to be diſpoſed of, ordered, and to be according to his pleaſure. This was natural to man before his fall, till a corrupt ſpirit by deceit entered him, and corrupted him. And while any thing of that corrupt ſpirit or fallen nature remains, he is apt to aſpire in the ſelf-hood, and to ſeek the enjoyment of what comes from the fountain (yea, and the fountain itſelf alſo) in and according to the will and wiſdom of the ſelf-hood. And here let man receive what gifts ſoever from God, be advanced to ever ſo high an habitation in the land of life, yea, have the very fountain itſelf given him; yet by this means he will corrupt, loſe the gift or ſpring, be ſeparated from it, and adulterate with what he can ſtill retain or gather in his own principle. And here do deep travellers loſe their way, falling from their portion

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in the land of life, and from their enjoyments in the paradiſe of the pleaſure of the life, into the earthly and ſenſual ſpirit, holding things wiſely and richly there in the earthly principle, not knowing the remove of their habitation thither, nor thinking that they are there.

He that readeth theſe things, let him not ſtrive to comprehend them; but be content with what he feeleth thereof ſuitable to his own preſent eſtate: and as the life grows in him, and he in the life, and he comes to meet with the things and exerciſes ſpoken of, the words and experiences concerning them will of themſelves open to him, and be uſeful and ſerviceable to him ſo far as the Lord pleaſeth, he keeping to the leadings, ſavour, and principle of life in himſelf, wherein alone his knowledge, ſight, growth, and experiences are ſafe.

Now he that would travel ſafely in ſpirit unto the land of life, let him wait to have theſe things following written by the finger of God in his heart, and the ſenſe and impreſſion thereof preſerved freſh in him.

Firſt, It is the free grace of God which begins the work of redemption, which cauſeth the light to ſhine, which worketh the repentance or turning from the dead ſtate, and alſo the belief in, and turning towards, the living God.

Secondly, It is the ſame grace alone that can preſerve and cauſe the plant of grace to grow. If there be a withdrawing of the light, a withholding of the free influence, that which depends thereupon cannot retain its freſhneſs; which the Lord may do as often as he pleaſeth, for the chaſtiſement of the rebellious part, or for the trial of his pure life and virtue in his plants.

Thirdly, The grace of God viſiting the ſoul in the death, in the darkneſs, in the fallen eſtate, begetteth life anew in it, maketh it in ſome meaſure light in the Lord, openeth an eye in it to ſee the things of God, an ear to hear and diſtinguiſh between the ſound of life and of death, an heart to turn from and refuſe the

the vanity, and to turn towards and abide in the living ſubſtance.

Fourthly, The Spirit of God carries on the work of redemption, by drawing, leading, and acting the quickened ſoul; by exerciſing that which he hath begotten in the life, under the law of the life. Thus the life draws the ſoul daily nearer and nearer towards the everlaſting ſpring, and from the fading emptineſs of ſin, vanity, and the creaturehood; and the ſoul, by the enlivening virtue, daily follows on after the life, in the leadings, ſpirit, and power thereof. There is a living ſoul begotten by the virtue of the grace, and the living ſoul daily lives in the grace, and travels in the virtue thereof from the unbelief to the faith, from the enmity to the love, from the perverſeneſs to the ſtraitneſs, from the iniquity to the righteouſneſs, even from all the territories of the darkneſs, and alſo from the weak meaſures and degrees of the grace and life towards the fulneſs itſelf, even until it perfectly center in, and be fully filled therewith.

Fifthly, Where there is a ſtopping of the virtue received from the grace, and not an anſwer in the heart, there the work of redemption is ſtopped. If the ſoul follow not in the drawing, the drawing is loſt, as to it. If the ear open not to hear the voice of the Word, or if it be not mixed with faith in the heart hearing, it proves ineffectual. If ſtrength iſſue forth from the Lord, yet if the ſoul receive not the ſtrength which iſſueth forth and bubbleth up in it, or anſwer it not in giving up to it, and travelling on, the ſoul abideth where it was at leaſt, if it alſo retire not backward from that eſtate and condition whereto the life had advanced it: for if the virtue of the life and grace be refuſed, there is an advantage given to death to re-enter, and gain ground by its contrary virtue and power.

Sixthly, Mark therefore diligently how the Lord doth carry on the diſpenſation of his love and free grace, even as if there were much done by the ſtrength and diligence of the creature. What wounding of itſelf

itſelf by repentance! what ſtriving to believe! what wreſtling againſt enemies, and for the influences of the grace, and to keep the hope up, and the diſtruſt out! What ſtrict watching and waiting, even as if the creature did work out its whole ſalvation!

Seventhly, Though the creature ſeemeth to do much itſelf, (having received life from the grace, and acting abundantly towards God in the grace) yet it is the grace and virtue which comes from the Creator (who is alſo the Redeemer) which indeed doth all: for though the creature repent really, and turn from the darkneſs with its whole heart, yet the repentance is of the virtue which flows from the grace, and not of the creature which receives the grace: and ſo likewiſe in the faith, the love, the obedience, the meekneſs, the patience, the watching, the waiting, the hoping, &c. Yea, the very receiving the grace is not of the creature, but of the grace: for the creature is dead until it be viſited by the grace; and by the viſitation of the grace alone is made alive, and able to receive it.

Behold then the *myſtery of redemption.* God is all in redemption; God doth all therein as fully as in creation, (it is a new creation) even the whole work thereof; yet the creature quickened and renewed is in unity with him in his operations, Phil. ii. 12, 13. He whoſe eyes are opened can read the myſtery, and in true underſtanding ſay, (if he hath been led, and hath proceeded ſo far) "I am able to do all things "through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me; yet not I, "but the grace of God in me." Now to bring the creature to this, the Lord exerciſeth it daily in obedience unto him, in the life and virtue which floweth forth from him, cauſing it to feel its weakneſs as it forgets the virtue, or aſpires to live of itſelf on the virtue received, out of the ſenſible feeling of its dependence upon the ſpring. And indeed the virtue that comes from God can alone anſwer God, and the creature is only accepted with the Spring and Father of life, as it is found therein.

Queſt.

Queſt. *But if the work of redemption be wrought by God's creating power, how cometh it to meet with ſo many rubs and interruptions, and ſometimes overturnings? Can any thing ſtop God's creating power?*

Anſ. So far as God abſolutely pleaſeth to create, nothing can ſtop or hinder; but the entrance of that which he beginneth to create into the creature, and its getting a being there, as alſo the growth and preſervation of it there, may be hindered by the force of ſpiritual enemies, if the Lord pleaſes to permit; or by the grieving and provoking of that free power, which alone begetteth and preſerveth life in the heart.

Objection. *Then the work of redemption is not carried on by an abſolute free-creating power.*

Anſ. The creating power and preſerving power is the ſame; but the work is ſomewhat different, both in the outward viſible creation, and in the inward new creation. The preſervation of that which is created and planted (unto its growth and perfection) is by the ſame power which created and planted; but rather in a way of care, induſtry, art, and ſkill, than of ſuch immediate force and power, though by the exerciſe and putting forth of the ſame virtue and power.

There are three things in redemption:

Firſt, There is the iſſuing out of the free grace, love, virtue, and divine power towards the creature.

Secondly, There is the opening of the eſtate of the creature thereby, convincing and drawing it out of the alienation from the life, towards unity with the life.

Thirdly, There is the following of the creature after the life, in the quickening virtue of the drawings, through all the ſnares, temptations, diverſions and oppoſitions of the enemy.

Now there is no hindering of the iſſuing forth of the free grace towards the creature, or of thoſe convictions and inclinations of the creature to follow, which neceſſarily enſue thereupon. But the purſuit and progreſs of the creature (or its abiding with the quickening virtue and power) may many ways be interrupted

terrupted and diverted, and so the creature drawn from under the influence of the free covenant: for though the covenant be free, yet the creature only partakes of it, as it is drawn into it, and preserved in it.

Therefore let those fear who feel the power and redeeming virtue, and know, that notwithstanding the free and certain promise to the seed, yet the creature is as clay in the hands of the potter, which may be made a vessel of honour or dishonour, as he pleaseth to favour it, or take occasion against it. And whoever would pass through the work of salvation and redemption, unto the salvation and redemption itself, in the living virtue received from the life, let him keep fast hold on the good pleasure, and in it give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, working out his salvation with fear and trembling, because God worketh in him both to will and to do of his good-will. And walking diligently and industriously in this path, he may attain the seal of the redemption, even that mark which can never be worn out, and to full assurance of faith in the redeeming power; though it is also possible for him afterwards, through much negligence, and grieving the Spirit whereby he was sealed, to lose the sight of the mark, and the comfort of the assurance, which was once fresh and clear in his spirit.

For a close at this time, I shall add a few words concerning the unity of God's grace (or free light of his Spirit) notwithstanding the various estates and conditions of man whom it visits, and the variety of its operations.

There is a three-fold state of man, wherein the grace of God visits him.

First, The Gentile-state, or state of nature.

Secondly, The Jew-state, or administration of the law, wherein God takes him under his own tuition, making

making known his will to him, and requiring obedience of him: and not only so, but also directs him to the inward teacher, and to the principle of the pure fear, which is the place of wisdom's teaching and instructions.

Thirdly, The gospel-state, or state of faith, where the principle is raised, the seed lives, and that is felt springing up, known, and enjoyed, which does the will, and receives the promise.

Now in all these, the law, the light, the life, the wisdom, the power, is one and the same; but the administrations are different.

In the Gentile-state, or state of nature, the light which man receives there (to discover evil, and work him into good) is of the Spirit, and by virtue of the promise. For he had been everlastingly shut up in the darkness, had it not been for the promise; and it is for the promise-sake, and from the free-grace, that he hath any visitation in the state of nature, and any desires after, or leadings towards, the good, and from the evil; which spring not, nor can spring, from corrupted nature; but from the free fountain of the new life.

In the law-state, the light grows more clear; the teacher is there discerned and acknowledged; his drawings, warnings, instructions, and reproofs felt more distinctly, and the soul (that is watchful) continually exercised therein.

In the gospel-state, the principle of life is raised, the promised seed come, the power which doth the will received, and the light of life entering into, and possessing the vessel.

Now this is the whole of man, to wait on the ministration of the life to him in his present estate, whether he be yet in the estate of nature, or under the law, or under grace. To know whence his redemption springs, and to wait on the redeeming arm for the beginnings, progress, and perfecting of it; and if it be in the feeling of that virtue, it is enough; or if it be

be kept longing or panting after it, it is well; yea, if there be but a deſire in him after a thirſt, there is hope; nay, if there be but the leaſt feeling of his dead, barren, and ſenſeleſs eſtate, there is ſome life in him, which the Lord loves, and will find a time to expreſs his bowels towards: yea, that which is wholly in the darkneſs, and ſhut up in the pit, the Lord hath bowels in him towards, and after many days may pleaſe to viſit. Oh! the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of the riches of the mercy and love of God! Who knows his yearnings towards ſouls, and his ways of viſiting and redeeming! O my ſoul! hope thou in the Lord for evermore, and leave not breathing towards him, till thou and his whole creation be filled and ſatisfied with him, and then fetch the full breath of life in him for ever.

POSTSCRIPT.

I HAVE been treating of the inward work, as it is wrought in the heart by the power, and brought to the ſenſible experimental knowledge of the creature; yet would not be ſo underſtood as if I made void what was done without by Chriſt in his own perſon, or any of thoſe ends and purpoſes for which it was wrought, and appointed ſo to be done by the Father: though this I know, that the knowledge of thoſe things, with the belief therein, or any practices and obſervations therefrom, without the life, can no more profit now, than the Jews literal knowledge of the law could profit them, when they were rejected therewith. And ſince the apoſtaſy, of this latter age eſpecially, I have clearly ſeen in the Spirit of the Lord, that the profeſſors knowledge of the letter of the goſpel, and cleaving to their apprehenſions which they gather therefrom, is become a ſnare and trap to them, to keep them from feeling the power, and living in the ſenſibility of the virtue of the grace; even as the Jews table (or gathered knowledge from Moſes and the prophets) became their ſnare and trap. The Lord open their eyes in his due time to diſcern it, that they may not withſtand that miniſtration and revelation of his everlaſting goſpel, which God ſeeth good to viſit the apoſtatized world with, after this long dark night of apoſtaſy! whereof thoſe that ſtick in forms, or knowledge of things in the letter, without the power, cannot but prove the greateſt enemies, oppoſers, and perſecutors.

Now to help them a little, if the Lord pleaſe; in the rolling of my bowels towards them I find my heart opened, to lay a few things before them.

Firſt,

Firſt, With my heart, in the ſight of the Lord, do I own that principle which formerly wrought in ſome of them, which I myſelf was wrought upon by, and knew not only the outward knowledge which they were acquainted with, but alſo the inward work: and I alſo knew what I called the light of nature, and what I called the light of the Spirit, the one whereof was not the other, but differed as far as Spirit and fleſh.

Secondly, I alſo own all the openings and refreſhments which they received from the Lord in reading of the ſcriptures in their publick or private exerciſes, and the experiences which they had from God in their own hearts: and I know that theſe things in themſelves were true in their proportion; however the preſent ſenſe, and holding of them out of that wherein they received them, may juſtly be judged by the Spirit of the Lord in his ſervants.

Thirdly, Though thoſe things were true in their day, and in their proportion and meaſure; yet in them they might loſe their virtue, and die, and ſo they not retain the thing in its life, in its own principle, in the newneſs of the Spirit, in that birth to which God gave it; but only an image of it in the natural underſtanding, in the earthly part, in the dead principle; and then their knowledge of God and their experiences cannot but be corrupted, and now become the poſſeſſion of death, and the engines of death in their hearts. Again, God had ſomewhat further to manifeſt, even to bring forth that which they earneſtly prayed for in that day; which they, having abode in that virtue wherein they prayed, might eaſily have diſcerned and embraced; but being out of that, and pleaſing themſelves with the literal knowledge of the things they then received, holding them in the wiſe and earthly part, that part cannot but ſtumble at the low and contemptible appearances of God, which are ſtill offenſive to that part. The great glory of God is hid in a little ſeed; and how can the great eye of the fleſhly-wiſe ſee it? We have Moſes and the

prophets, (ſaid the Jews after the fleſh) but as for this man, we know not whence he is. Even ſo it is now: we know the relation which the ſcriptures have given of Chriſt by the apoſtles, we are ſure this is of God, ſay the profeſſors; but as for this little ſeed of the kingdom, or light of God in the heart, we cannot believe that all we want is to ſpring up in it.

Now, Fourthly, There is a neceſſity both of the knowledge of perſons to paſs away, and alſo of their experiences to be given up, and let fall, in theſe two caſes following:

Firſt, When the virtue is withdrawn from them, when death hath caught them, when they become death's goods: for that which is received from the life, is only profitable to the ſoul in the virtue of the life. When the earthly part hath caught them, and ſeated itſelf there, they then become the ſtrong-holds of the enemy, and the engines of death to the heart; ſo that then life and true relief is not to be had in them, but where the eternal virtue pleaſes next to appear.

Secondly, When God hath ſomewhat to bring forth further in the world, or in any particular heart, to make way for it he brings death upon that which was before living. Thus when God is pleaſed to *bring forth a greater meaſure of faith, and power of his Spirit*, he diſtreſſeth the heart, making the foregoing faith and power appear weak, and paſs away; and many times for a ſeaſon ſhutteth up the ſoul in the unbelief, until the freſh faith and freſh power ſpring up and ariſe. And this cauſeth the neceſſity of the further diſpenſations of his eternal virtue to appear, and the beauty of them to ſhine; which they would not have done ſo abundantly, had it not been for the foregoing diſtreſs of the heart.

There are yet ſome things further weighty upon my heart to lay before them, needful for them to conſider of, which may be ſerviceable and helpful to them in their preſent condition, if the Lord pleaſe to open their hearts, and impreſs them thereon. They are four propo-

propoſitions, relating to the right knowledge of the things of God, which are theſe following:

Firſt, *That the knowledge of the things of God comes from the Spirit.* As the ſcriptures themſelves came from the Spirit, ſo the true knowledge of them is alone given, to any man which receiveth it, by the ſame Spirit. And no man living can know the mind of the words which the Spirit ſpake, but as the ſame Spirit which ſpake them, gives the meaning of them.

Secondly, *That the knowledge of God* (the living knowledge, the ſerviceable knowledge) *is alone held in the Spirit, and in the birth which is of the Spirit.* Man's natural part is not the true treaſury, nor is man's reaſon to be maſter of any of the things of God's Spirit; but that which holds the knowledge of the kingdom, the grace of the kingdom, the living experiences, is that which is born of the ſeed of the kingdom; and man's reaſon is for ever to be ſhut out of the things of God, further than it bows, is limited, and ſubjected.

Thirdly, *That the knowledge received from the Spirit, is ſtill to be tried by the Spirit.* The Spirit alone can keep it living, and the Spirit alone can tell whether the life and virtue be ſtill in it, or whether death hath caught it; whether it be the manna fit for the ſoul's food; or manna once given, but now corrupted. Oh! my dear friends, wait to underſtand my experience concerning this thing, which is this! That which I had certainly received from God, and which the true birth at firſt had fed on, the earthly birth would be catching at, laying hold of, and treaſuring up to feed on at another time. Likewiſe in my reading of the ſcriptures, I lay open to this great ſnare, of reading in my own will, and of gathering from thence in mine own underſtanding, and ſo growing wiſe concerning the things of God after the fleſh: for though at that time I was not without living knowledge and experiences of God, yet I knew not how to turn from the death, nor to keep to the life; and ſo the bad, the lean, the earthly, the ill-favoured, overgrew the good

and well-pleaſing to God, and brought it into bitter miſery and death. Oh! that ye knew being begotten of the will of the Father, and keeping to the will of the Father, and receiving the bread daily from his hand! That which man conceiveth concerning the ſcriptures, is not the pure milk of the word, but that which the breaſts give out; that is it which hath the immediate life, virtue, and true nouriſhment in it. And this muſt be returned back into the treaſury, and not held in the earthly part, in the earthly will and underſtanding, but received from the life again when it is again needed; yea, this have I often known, that when I have been in great diſtreſs, I have received freſh comfort from the Lord; but running to that afterwards, it never was able to comfort me, but more deeply wounded me. And thus hath the Lord been teaching me to live upon himſelf, and not upon any thing received from him, but upon the life itſelf, the mercy, the good pleaſure, which proportions out the living bread daily to the living birth.

Fourthly, *It is eaſy receiving of knowledge in the earthly part, in the earthly wiſdom, out of the Spirit and living virtue.* When one readeth a ſcripture, it is eaſy conceiving and apprehending a meaning one's ſelf, or taking in another man's meaning; but it is hard abſtaining from all conceivings and reaſonings of the mind, and waiting for the pure will and opening of the Spirit therein. Alſo it is eaſy retaining of knowledge, and making uſe of it in the will and wiſdom of the earthly mind (for both theſe are natural): but it is hard denying the reaſon, the thoughts and imaginations, and watching to the Spirit.

O profeſſors! wait for the living appearance of God, even for the freſhneſs of his Spirit in your ſpirits; that in that which cometh from the Spirit ye may know the Spirit, and may alſo know how to turn to him and abide with him, having the watch ſet againſt that wiſdom in yourſelves, which in all ages and generations is eternally ſhut out of the things of the kingdom, although it may gather, get, and hold

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a vaſt knowledge of the things of the kingdom in the earthly treaſury. Thus fleſhly Iſrael hath the wiſdom of the letter; but ſpiritual Iſrael the wiſdom, virtue, and life of the Spirit in all ages and generations. And though he that is born after the fleſh, deſpiſeth him who is born after the Spirit, yet this is God's heir; and the bondwoman, the earthly wiſdom, with all her children, (even the greateſt giants in knowledge, profeſſion of religion, and ſcripture-obſervations) muſt be caſt out, and not inherit the land of life. This is written that that might be raiſed in you by the power, which is to inherit the life eternal; and ye not find your ſouls deceived, when the light of that day fully opens, which hath already dawned.

I was in a poor low condition, when the Lord formerly viſited me; as loſt, as undone, as miſerable as any. What knowledge, what life, what precious virtue I then received, was from God's grace; which was ſtill his own, and he might call for it at his pleaſure. And ſurely, he which hath received from the fountain, ought to truſt and to give back again to the fountain, when he calleth for it; and then to remain empty, naked, and deſolate, until he be again freely viſited. This is an hard leſſon, who can learn it? Who can truſt his life with the fountain, and lie open to what follows? Yet this did the Lord require of me; and my heart being not willing to part with my life, but ſtriving to retain it, and grow in the firſt way of the diſpenſation of the grace unto perfection, he brake it after an unutterable manner, and brought ſuch a miſery and deſolation upon me as I could not poſſibly have ſuſpected, having been ſealed by him. And now he is teaching me to live more fully upon his grace, or rather upon the ſpring, where I am nothing, where I can be nothing for ever: but he is and will be what he will be, and when he will be; and nothing in me can be ſatisfied with him, but what is of him, and lives in him. And here all that I have known, or formerly taſted of him, ſprings up again at his pleaſure; and I drink of the old wine, and alſo

of the new, but have nothing at my own diſpoſal. And when I catch at any thing, or would be any thing, I loſe the ſpring, and am corrected for my backſliding and adultery of ſpirit, but am ſtill again viſited with freſh love, and the ſpringings up of freſh power and life, and freſh viſitations of the rich mercy and grace, which the everlaſting fountain naturally openeth in its own. The pearl is exceeding rich, the treaſure of life unutterable; and he that will poſſeſs it, muſt ſell all for it; even all his luſts and corruptions; yea, all the riches of his nature (the beſt of his will, the beſt of his wiſdom moſt refined); nay, not only ſo, but all the riches of his ſpirit, all that he hath held, or can hold out of the life. Then, when he is poor in ſpirit, and hath nothing in himſelf but emptineſs, nothing ſo much as to receive or retain the life, but what is formed, groweth up in, and is preſerved in the life, according to its own mere will and good pleaſure; then alone is he fit to be comprehended and brought forth in the eternal ſpring. Perfectly happy is he who is perfectly poſſeſſed thereof; yet he is not without a proportion of bleſſedneſs alſo, who is mourning after it, and travelling towards it; which can never be attained by the natural parts retaining the letter of any ſpiritual revelation or knowledge; but only by beginning in the eternal virtue, abiding in it, and travelling from death to death, and from life to life; till all be ſlain which is to die and periſh in the way, and all be raiſed and perfected which is to receive, and live in the kingdom and crown of life for ever; which the Lord lays before all to run after, but none but the ſpiritual ſeed (begotten of and abiding in the Spirit) can obtain. Mind then this brief ſum.

The loſt creature, the undone creature, is graciouſly ſought after and viſited by the fountain of its life and being.

Being viſited with the mercy and grace, and impreſſed, it receiveth ſomewhat of the grace and living virtue from the fountain.

Having

Having received ſomewhat, the creature is apt to retain it in the creaturely veſſel, (even in the own will, and to enlarge the own wiſdom thereby, and ſo to become ſomewhat again in itſelf) forgetting the ſpring.

As the creature retaineth any thing in the natural part, out of the immediate feeling of the living virtue, it corrupts, it adulterates from the living ſpring.

And that which any one hath thus adulterated with, muſt be taken from him, and he be made dead to it, and it to him, before he can be recovered into a living ſtate, fit to enjoy what he formerly received, or further to receive of, and grow up in, the freſh living virtue.

SOME

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

SHEWING

MAN HIS DUTY,

AND POINTING HIM TO THE

PRINCIPLE of GOD in his HEART;

WHICH IS

The ROOT of LIFE in all its DISPENSATIONS,

And which, being kept to, is able to bear the FRUIT of LIFE in every DISPENSATION.

AS ALSO SOME

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS,

CONCERNING THE

SEED of JACOB and the TRUE CHURCH.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

THE PREFACE.

THE goodneſs of God endureth for ever. And though his creature man (who ſhould have been ſubject and obedient to him) hath ſinned againſt him, and by motions and inclinations of his own will and wiſdom (out of the principle of his pure life, which was to have been his guide and governor) hath fallen ſhort of his glory; yet he ſtill pleaſeth to viſit his poor loſt creature with loving-kindneſs and mercy, and with various diſpenſations of his life, according to his pleaſure. What man is there that hath not received a ſoul from the breath of the Almighty? And what ſoul is it that hath not ſome viſitations of life from that living breath? The bowels of eternity moſt naturally roll towards all its offspring; who ſeeketh the gathering of them all in the variety, and according to the limitations of his will, in his pure wiſdom.

There is a current or ſtream of life before the promiſe is known, which ſecretly viſits all, diſcovering the darkneſs in ſome meaſure unto all, and drawing from it. And happy is he who falls in with, and follows the leadings of the Almighty here; for then he cannot abide in the darkneſs, but ſtill (according to the need of his condition) will meet with a true guide out of it, and with the true power which redeemeth and delivereth from it. For as the promiſe made to Adam, had relation to all his poſterity; ſo whoever is

is viſited with any light by virtue of the promiſe, that light will lead him to the promiſe, and he (in the obedience thereof) will meet with the ſweetneſs and virtue of the promiſe. So that the loweſt diſpenſation of God (the creature being exerciſed therein, feeling the want of God's power, and drawn to depend upon him for mercy and ſtrength) will lead fallen man back again to his Maker, by the virtue which flows into man from the promiſe, though ever ſo ſecretly and hiddenly. For it is not the diſtinct knowledge of the promiſe, (though that is a very great advantage) but the virtue flowing from the promiſe, which ſaves. Man being touched by that virtue, and by the touch thereof quickened towards God; and in that virtue which comes from the redeeming mercy, cleaving to his Maker, and hoping in his tender bowels, and feeling the weakneſs, inſufficiency, and corruption of his own will and underſtanding, and ſo going forth from himſelf towards the ſpring which quickened him. Here is Chriſt known in ſpirit, received in ſpirit, believed and relied on in ſpirit, and his living virtue already felt and further waited for. And can this man, thus walking, thus believing, thus obeying, thus cleaving to the principle which gives life, thus receiving virtue from it, and growing up (in that virtue) out of the ſelf-hood, into it; I ſay, can this man miſs of eternal life, which runs along in all the ſtreamings forth of this living virtue?

But oh! how ſweet is the ſtream of life in the ſenſible manifeſtation of the promiſe! He who feels the covenant in Chriſt, and life ſtreaming into his heart through the covenant, and the ſeal of eternal peace to his ſoul, and that he ſhall never be left nor forſaken by the fountain of mercy, but all that ever befalls him ſhall conduce towards the working out of the perfect redemption and ſalvation of his ſoul; this is a precious ſtate indeed; and this is the ſtate which the feeling of the faith, and the living obedience in the Spirit, leads to. Happy are they that walk in the path thereof, who content not themſelves with man's knowledge

of

of Chriſt, with man's belief of the things written concerning him, with man's obedience to the precepts left on record by the apoſtles, but whoſe living ſoul cannot be ſatisfied without the feeling and preſſing after Chriſt the life, and without a true engrafting into him in ſpirit, through the living Word, or teſtimony of life, received into, and believed on in the heart.

And how ſweet alſo is the miniſtration of the law, which comes from the promiſe, and is managed to the ſoul by the hand of the Mediator! How ſweet is it to ſee the creature fall daily! to find one's own ſtrength to believe, to obey, to ſuffer, to abide with Chriſt, to wait on Chriſt, to hope for Chriſt, daily battered and brought to nothing, and no life left but what iſſues from the ſpring, and is alone maintained by the free current thereof into the heart daily! Here the ſtroke of the law is received by degrees unto perfect death. Here are the openings of the pure prophecies in the Spirit concerning a new kingdom, a new birth, a new heir, a new life. Here is the axe laid to the root of the tree, and that cut down in the heart which is not to live, and which hinders the heir from his inheritance. Here is the vale of tears; which tears ſpring from the life, whoſe virtue waſheth away the corruptible day by day. Here is the houſe of mourning, and that ſtate of darkneſs entered into, which ſwallows up all the joy of the dark earthly ſpirit, and conſumes its nature. Here the light of life is ſown, and through theſe exerciſes it ſprings up; and after the paſſing away of this miniſtration, breaks forth in ſtrength upon that ſoul which hath been thoroughly exerciſed herein.

I deſire the good of all mankind, waiting for the ſwallowing up of the diſpenſations of death, and the breaking forth of life upon them in the ſeaſons thereof, according to the good pleaſure of him whoſe gift life is, and whoſe are all the diſpenſations of it. And in that love, through the openings and drawings of life in me, have I writ what follows; not to upbraid

or

or ſtrike at any, but to be an help unto ſuch as the Lord ſhall pleaſe to make it ſerviceable to. Wait on the Lord, eye him, read in fear, praying to be touched by, and gathered into, that which gives the feeling of the weight of truth. Oh! that mens ſouls were awakened, that they might know what it is to periſh from God, and what to be ſaved by him. The proper portion of man's ſoul is the fountain of eternal life; and he can never be happy (nor in true reſt, peace, or joy) while ſeparated from it. Let him who is not brutiſh in underſtanding, and whoſe ſoul is not wholly dead God-wards, conſider this.

SOME

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

Shewing MAN his DUTY.

Queſt. *WHAT is the proper work of man here in this world?*

Anſ. To fear God, and keep his commandments. This is all that God requires of him, and this is enough to make him happy.

Queſt. *What is God?*

Anſ. The fountain of beings and natures, the inward ſubſtance of all that appears; who createth, upholdeth, conſumeth, and bringeth to nothing, as he pleaſeth.

Queſt. *How may I know that there is a God?*

Anſ. By ſinking down into the principle of his own life, wherein he revealeth himſelf to the creature. There the ſoul receiveth ſuch taſtes and knowledge of him, as cannot be queſtioned by him that abideth there.

Queſt. *What is it to fear this God?*

Anſ. The ſpirit and ſoul of the creature ſtanding in awe of his nature, and waiting to be kept in due ſubjection thereto; this is to fear him, and this is the

proper means of preſerving the ſpirit of the creature right in its motion towards him, attendance upon him, and expectations from him.

Queſt. *What are his commandments?*

Anſ. They are ſuch as are either general to all mankind, common to ſome ſorts of men, or proper to particular perſons.

Queſt. *What are thoſe which are general to all mankind?*

Anſ. They are very many; but may all be referred to theſe two heads; to wit, *To love God above all, and one's neighbour as one's ſelf*; even ſo in every reſpect doing to him, as one would be done to by him in the like caſe.

Queſt. *How may man perform theſe?*

Anſ. Only by receiving a principle of life from God, and keeping cloſe thereto.

Queſt. *How may a man come by a principle of life from God?*

Anſ. God is near to every man with the breath of his life, breathing upon him at times according to his pleaſure; which man's ſpirit opening unto, and drinking in, it becometh a ſeed or principle of life in him, overſpreading and leavening him up to eternal life.

Queſt. *What hinders man from receiving this principle of life, and from keeping cloſe thereto?*

Anſ. A fleſhly principle, which is contrary to the knowledge, fear, and obedience of the Lord, and to all that ſprings from the principle and power of his life.

Queſt. *How comes this fleſhly principle to be found in man?*

Anſ. It was ſown there by the enemy of man's ſoul; man giving him entrance into his ſpirit, by hearkening to his ſuggeſtions and allurements.

Queſt. *What help hath man againſt this fleſhly principle?*

Anſ. None of himſelf; but being touched freely by the other principle, and taſting thereof, he is to wait on God's mercy and grace for the manifeſtation of his light

light and power, to diſcover to him the evil nature and courſe of his own heart, and to cut down the corrupt deſires, reaſonings, and imaginations thereof.

Queſt. *In what way is this effected upon the heart?*

Anſ. In the heart's belief of this principle, and in its obedience thereto.

Queſt. *How may a man come to believe in this principle?*

Anſ. In feeling its nature, in waiting to feel ſomewhat begotten by it; in this its light ſprings, its life ſprings, its love ſprings, its hidden power appears, and its preſerving wiſdom and goodneſs is made manifeſt to the ſoul that clings to it in the living ſenſe, which its preſence and appearance begets in the ſoul.

Queſt. *How may a man come to obey this principle?*

Anſ. In the faith, in the eying of it, in the clinging to it, the ſtrength iſſues from it into the creature, which maketh it able to perform all that it calleth for.

Queſt. *How come perſons to be ſo weak, and to complain ſo much for want of power, who feel a true beginning of life, and earneſt breathings after God?*

Anſ. From the enemy's interpoſing of reaſonings between them and their faith. The darkneſs, the principle of unbelief, lies near, and is ſtill raiſing mud (as much as poſſible) between the principle of life and the ſoul: and ſo far as it can come between, it diſturbeth both the motions of the ſoul towards its ſpring or principle of life, and alſo the ſpring's clear bubbling up in, and running through the ſoul.

Queſt. *What is to be done in this caſe?*

Anſ. The ſoul is to wait God's ſeaſons of deliverance from theſe, and to hope for a hidden ſupport from his grace, while the viſitations and leadings of his life are not made manifeſt.

Queſt. *What ground is there for this hope?*

Anſ. There is ground of hope for the creature in God's goodneſs; who naturally loveth and ſeeketh after the ſouls which he hath made, and doth not readily nor eaſily caſt off in any of his diſpenſations.

Beſides, where he hath begotten ſomewhat, and where the bent of the heart is towards him, and the deſire after his pure life and ſpirit above all things kindled, there hath he laid the foundation of a building, which (though at preſent it may lie in the duſt, and under heaps of ruins) he cannot forget.

Queſt. *Are there other commands beſides theſe common to all men?*

Anſ. Yes; according to that diſpenſation of life and mercy unto which they are called, and into which they are admitted by the love and kindneſs of God, which overſpreadeth all his works, and who forgetteth not his creatures in their eſtate of ſeparation and alienation from him.

Queſt. *Are there then more diſpenſations of life and mercy than one?*

Anſ. Yes. For though the life and mercy in itſelf is but one; yet it hath ſeveral ways of ſeeking out after, and gathering into itſelf, the loſt ſons of Adam.

Queſt. *What have been the chief ways of diſpenſing the light of life towards mankind?*

Anſ. Firſt, By a ſecret ſhining into their hearts. Thus the ſoul of the Lord holdeth forth ſome beams of his eternal light to all mankind, according to his pleaſure, at ſome time or other viſiting the darkeſt corners of the earth, and making ſome way therein for the ſcattering of that darkneſs which ſeparates the ſoul from the light of life, and from the ſweet preſence and enjoyment of its Creator, which naturally flows into every ſoul in its believing and obeying of that light.

Queſt. *Were ever any thus gathered to the Lord?*

Anſ. The Lord is able to make any diſpenſation of his life effectual. And as many of the Jews were not gathered by the law, ſo many of the Gentiles might be gathered without the law.

Queſt. *But the law gave the knowledge of the Meſſiah to come through faith, in whom was the remiſſion of ſins known, and ſtrength againſt ſin?*

Anſ.

Anſ. The knowledge of Chriſt runs along in all the diſpenſations of the eternal light: the light cometh from him, and it manifeſts him in ſpirit; and the remiſſion by his blood is ſpiritually known in the ſoul's feeling the living virtue thereof. The law and the goſpel are both known in ſpirit, wherever the eternal light viſiteth and is received.

Queſt. *What are the commands common to thoſe?*

Anſ. They are known to thoſe who are thus gathered, who in the life thus diſpenſed, feel the leadings of it, and in its light are ſenſible of thoſe requirings which univerſally ſtream forth from it among thoſe that are thus gathered.

Queſt. *What other way of diſpenſing the light of life hath there been?*

Anſ. That of the promiſe to the fathers, which was before the law, wherein they ſaw the day of the Meſſiah, and were glad. This was a glorious diſpenſation, in which they taſted the Sonſhip, and felt power to walk with God, and faith to truſt him in his leadings, and were tranſlated by him (in a ſweet and precious degree) into the meaſure of his life, which made them pilgrims and ſtrangers in this world, and ſteered their ſpirits towards another country.

Queſt. *What were the commands common to theſe?*

Anſ. They were ſeen by them in the ſtreamings forth of that diſpenſation of life among them; a taſte whereof the quickened ſpirit may have, in reading the words concerning them up and down the ſcriptures.

Queſt. *What further diſpenſation of life hath there been?*

Anſ. That of the law to the Jews.

Queſt. *Was that a miniſtration of life? Was it not rather a miniſtration of death and condemnation?*

Anſ. It proved ſo in its effect, through the weakneſs of their ſtate; but its natural tendency and proper effect, in caſe of obedience thereto, was life. And alſo in the midſt of its adminiſtering death and condemnation, it pointed to him who was the juſtification

and the life; insomuch as the law was kind to them in slaying them, and serviceable to the life of such souls as kindly received the stroke thereof, and fled to the hope set before them.

Quest. *What were the common laws amongst these?*

Ans. They are to be read in the writings of Moses and the prophets, wherein God's law and testimonies were abundantly given forth to that people.

Quest. *Have there been yet any further dispensations of life?*

Ans. Yes; that of the gospel, before the apostasy and falling away from the living truth and power of the Spirit, into man's wisdom, inventions, and imitations.

Quest. *What were the laws common to these?*

Ans. They may be read in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, where the record of the ministration is to be found.

Quest. *What hath the ministration of life been since the apostles days?*

Ans. Very low, very weak, very dark, very hidden, exceedingly retired; yet true children have been begotten, and food hath been handed to them from the Father, and they have been nourished up in the faith, and have kept the commandments of their day, and died in the faith: and those who have thus been led and preserved, their souls are at rest, and in the peace of God. But these have not been in any particular distinct gathering, and clear separation out of the world; but scattered up and down in several mistaken forms, and loaded with the inventions of the earthly wisdom, and with the bondage and weight of corruption, not knowing that clearness of spirit, and victory over sin, by the presence of the life, which was felt and enjoyed by the Christians before the apostasy.

Quest. *Had these any common commandments?*

Ans. Not so distinctly as the former; for they lying in a heap of confusion in a wilderness, or chaos, scattered in the mists and fogs of antichristian darkness one from another, had not such common beams of light,

light, or clear ſtreams of life running among them, as thoſe that had a more diſtinct gathering. Yet ſome teſtimony for God, and againſt the corruption of the times, according to what was in their day and age to be teſtified for and againſt, did run among every ſort (of ſuch as were true-hearted) in ſome kind or other. And for this they were hated and perſecuted by men, (even by ſuch as were formal, and of another ſpirit) and alſo dearly tendered and beloved of the Lord.

Queſt. *Hath there been any further diſpenſation of life ſince the apoſtaſy?*

Anſ. There is another begun, whoſe glory is to exceed the former, after the darkneſs (which overſpread and clouded the beauty of the former) is expelled by the growing brightneſs of this appearance.

Queſt. *How may it appear that there is another?*

Anſ. There is no knowing this diſpenſation but by being gathered into the light of it. Wiſdom hath been alone juſtified of her children in former ages, and ſhe can be juſtified by none elſe, in her appearance in this age.

Queſt. *What is the difference of this from the former?*

Anſ. It is more inward, more retired, more cloſely depending upon the principle of life in the Spirit, than the former.

Queſt. *Is it then the ſame in ſubſtance?*

Anſ. Yes, the very ſame. The very ſame truth of Chriſt Jeſus, the very ſame building of God in the Spirit, the very ſame church is to be again brought forth; but in greater glory, that being now to be left out whereby the enemy then entered; and alſo degrees of beauty, ſtrength and perfection being to be added.

Queſt. *But ſurely a greater glory than that in the apoſtles days is not to be expected; nay, it is not the belief of many that ever that ſhall be reſtored.*

Anſ. This ariſeth from the unbelief, and want of the ſight of the thing by the right eye in the true light. For the travel of the eternal Spirit in its diſpenſation is towards perfection; and after the darkneſs

of antichriſt, the brightneſs of the light of life is to ſhine more clear than ever, as is abundantly teſtified in the ſcriptures, (eſpecially in the book of the Revelations) and alſo ſeen by many in the clear openings of the ſame eternal Spirit.

Queſt. *Are there any common commands given forth in this diſpenſation?*

Anſ. Yes, unto all who are gathered in the Spirit of it. They all feel the ſame common commands unto ſeveral things, according to the nature and drift of this diſpenſation.

Queſt. *What are they?*

Anſ. They are many, and concern many things; to wit, their meetings to worſhip and wait on the Lord, who hath viſited and gathered them; together with their way of worſhipping, as alſo their converſe and converſation amongſt men, &c. which are not eaſily ſpecified: neither indeed are they fit to be held forth to man's diſputing wiſdom; but to be waited for in the Spirit, where the light of them is evident, and the ſtrength to perform them received and held.

Queſt. *But how may men know that theſe are true commands of the Lord, and not imaginations or opinions of their own?*

Anſ. When the principle of life is known, and that which God hath begotten felt in the heart, the diſtinction between what God opens and requires there, and what ſprings up in man's wiſdom, reaſon, and imagination, is very manifeſt.

Queſt. *Are there particular commands to particular perſons beſides theſe?*

Anſ. As every heart hath its own particular ſtate, which is only fully known to the Spirit of the Lord, who is the leader of the ſoul out of its darkneſs and captivity, and the exerciſer of it in what he judgeth proper to its preſent ſtate; ſo the Lord giveth out particular commands as he pleaſeth, either to do or forbear ſuch a thing, as he judgeth it neceſſary for the ſoul.

Queſt. *How may theſe be known?*

Anſ.

Anſ. By coming into acquaintance with the Lord, and the movings and voice of his Spirit. Firſt, the quickenings of the Spirit of the Lord are to be received into the heart; then the eye fixed in that which is quickened on him that quickened it, and all the inward ſenſes waiting upon him, and exerciſed towards him. Thus the ſheep come to know the voice of the Shepherd, and to follow his leadings into the paſtures of life, and out of the paths and feedings of death, and are drawn on by him towards any thing, or ſtopt by him from any thing, at his pleaſure.

Oh! that the ſons of men knew their God, and were gathered into any living diſpenſation by him, wherein they might have the true ſenſe and ſeeking of him! Oh! that mens ſouls were awakened to feel the want of the breath of life from whence they came! Oh! that the ſeed of Iſrael were redeemed by their God, that their glory and beauty in his pure life might awaken the nations! O God, haſten thy work in the world! bring the glory and wiſdom of man into contempt, and bring forth thine own glory and wiſdom in its pure brightneſs.

SOME

SOME QUESTIONS and ANSWERS, CONCERNING THE SEED of ISRAEL, AND THE TRUE CHURCH.

Queſt. *WHO are the ſeed of Iſrael?*

Anſ. They who are begotten of the Spirit and nature of the eternal Father and fountain of life, out of the ſpirit and nature of this world.

Queſt. *Are there ſuch a ſeed in the earth?*

Anſ. Yea, and have always been, who have ſtill been the bleſſing of this world, though conſtantly hated and perſecuted by it.

Queſt. *Why are they hated by the world?*

Anſ. Becauſe they are not of the world, but faithful witneſſes againſt it, teſtifying unto it, that its ways are evil, and its end miſery.

Queſt. *Why do they thus teſtify?*

Anſ. It is their nature, and God calleth them thereunto. He hath ſet up his light in their hearts, to ſhine forth in the world, and ſcatter the darkneſs.

Queſt. *How do they ſcatter the darkneſs? Doth not the darkneſs rather ſcatter them?*

Anſ. The darkneſs doth indeed often prevail againſt them outwardly, hunting and ſcattering them up and down

down upon the face of the earth; but they ſtill prevail inwardly, in the teſtimony of mens conſciences, over the darkneſs; who at one time or other are generally made to acknowledge in the ſecrets of their hearts that they are of God.

Queſt. *Why doth the Lord ſuffer it to be thus, that that which is precious, and of him, ſhould be trodden under foot by that which is not of him?*

Anſ. The Lord hath his ſeaſon for the diſcovery of all things. He hath given the kingdom of darkneſs its time and power to reign over the juſt, and to keep the holy ſeed in bondage and captivity; and he hath alſo appointed his ſuffering ſeed its ſeaſon of ſuffering in all ages and generations. And by theſe, and through theſe, the nature of each is diſcovered, their ends, and their ſuitableneſs to their ends.

Queſt. *But ſhall this holy ſeed always ſuffer in this world?*

Anſ. Nay, not ſo; for the Lord hath a day to raiſe the juſt into dominion over the unjuſt, even here in this world.

Queſt. *When ſhall this be?*

Anſ. When the malice and perſecution of the enemies of the pure ſeed are filled up, and the meaſure of its ſufferings finiſhed.

Queſt. *Where are this ſeed?*

Anſ. They are (as yet, for the generality) ſcattered up and down under the face of the whole heaven. Not to be found in a viſible body gathered together; but ſcattered up and down, here a few, and there a few; here one, and there another.

Queſt. *Were they then once in a body?*

Anſ. Yea, they were once embodied: for after God had caſt off the natural ſeed, the Jews, he gathered the ſpiritual ſeed into a body, ſetting them as a city on a hill, and making them the light of the world.

Queſt. *How came they afterwards to be ſcattered?*

Anſ. The dragon hath done this, God ſuffering him many ways to aſſault this building, and ſo far at length to prevail over it, as even to ſcatter his church out of her

her built-ſtate, into a wilderneſs ſtate, where no eye can diſcern her any more, but that which is of God. (Wait to read Rev. xii. in the light of that Spirit which wrote it).

Queſt. *Why did God ſuffer the dragon to prevail over ſo precious and glorious a building?*

Anſ. Becauſe there was ſomewhat of the power of darkneſs neceſſary to be made manifeſt, which could not be otherwiſe ſo made manifeſt as by this its prevailing; and alſo that he might ſhew the neceſſity of, and make way for the bringing forth of that, over which the power of darkneſs cannot prevail.

Queſt. *Is there then ſuch a thing to be brought forth?*

Anſ. Yea, there is a church, there is a ſpiritual building, againſt which the gates of hell can never prevail; which is ſo united to the rock, that the powers of darkneſs can by no means come between the rock and it.

Queſt. *Are this church and the church in the apoſtles days different, or the ſame?*

Anſ. This church hath been in all ages; but a more full and perfect bringing forth in the apoſtles days than in any age before: yet not ſuch a bringing forth outwardly, as might not be driven back. And therefore did the Lord ſuffer it to be aſſaulted and prevailed over, in that wherein it was weak through the outwardneſs of it, that (after many days) he might manifeſt his ſtrength in bringing it forth more perfectly.

Queſt. *Where hath this church been theſe many ages, ſince the dragon's ſore aſſault and overcoming it, as to its outwardneſs?*

Anſ. In the wilderneſs. Rev. xii.

Queſt. *What wilderneſs? Any outward viſible wilderneſs?*

Anſ. It is a parable, repreſenting the ſcattered ſtate of the ſeed after God's preſence was withdrawn from the viſible building, and it laid waſte as to its life, and the appearances of his Spirit, and the dragon got into, and ſeated in, the form, 2 Theſſ. ii. 4. then the

ſeed

ſeed and appearances of God were to be found elſewhere, and not in thoſe buildings.

Queſt. *How were thoſe churches or buildings in the apoſtles days laid waſte?*

Anſ. The preſence of the life and power makes the form living; and no longer is it or can it be ſo, than the life and power remain with it. Now they not abiding in the life and in the power, (the apoſtaſy coming, ſpoken of, 2 Theſſ. ii. 3.) the life and the power alſo withdrew from them, and left them the dead form, into which the prince of death immediately enters; and ſo that which was a church unto God while the life abode there, and they in the life, becomes a ſynagogue of Satan, he entering into the dead form, and being worſhipped there in the dead form. So that it is not any outward gathering or profeſſion that makes a church under the New Teſtament, but only the life and power. That gathering which is in the life and power is a true church; that which is not, is a ſynagogue of Satan, let them profeſs what they will. For the living God dwells in living temples only, and the prince of death dwells in all the territories of death.

Queſt. *According to this rule there are, or have been, few true churches of God in the world ſince the days of the apoſtles.*

Anſ. The true church hath been in a wilderneſs-ſtate ſince the days of the apoſtles. A ſcattered ſeed have her children been, and ſhe a widow forſaken; God providing a place for the inward part of his building, and giving up the outward part to the formal ſpirit, to the poſſeſſion of the powers of darkneſs. Read Rev. xi. 1, 2. The Lord, by the withdrawing of his Spirit, took down his own building, gave up the outward court to the Gentiles, removed the inward temple, altar, and worſhippers into the wilderneſs. And ſince that time, men have built many buildings, in the imitation of that which God built (every ſort according to their ſkill, and reaſonings of their

their wiſdom about the thing); but they are not the ſame building. But the true building, the true church, is reproached by all theſe builders, and not known to be the thing, becauſe hid from their eye.

Queſt. *When ſhall this true church appear again?*

Anſ. When God, who gave her the wings of an eagle to fly into the wilderneſs, bringeth her the ſame wings again to fly out. Then ſhall ſhe come forth clothed with the ſun again, with the moon under her feet, and with her crown of ſtars.

Queſt. *How may it appear that thoſe preſent buildings which are to be found in the world are not the true churches?*

Anſ. Becauſe they are built by men, and their ſtrength ſtands not in the demonſtration and power of the Spirit, but in the wiſdom and power of man; take away that, they ſoon crumble and moulder of themſelves. Beſides, they are not clothed with the ſun, have not the moon under their feet, nor know not the travail to bring forth the man-child, which the true church knows even in the wilderneſs.

Queſt. *Why do men keep ſuch buildings, and not rather mourn after the true building of God, which is built and preſerved in the light and power of his Spirit?*

Anſ. Antichriſt's time is not yet fully ended, nor the miſts wherewith he blinds mens eyes ſcattered, nor the cup of his fornications (which makes every one drunk and beſotted as to the ſight and knowledge of the true church which drinks of it) taken from mens lips.

Queſt. *How may I know the true church?*

Anſ. By being born of God's Spirit, and looking with that eye which he gives to thoſe whom he begets in that light of life which ſhineth from his preſence: here his holy church and true ſpouſe is diſcerned and diſtinguiſhed from all falſe reſemblances, and vain pretenders.

Queſt. *Are there then many reſemblances of the true church, and pretenders to be ſuch, which are not ſo indeed?*

Anſ.

Anſ. Yes; there is the mother of harlots, Rev. xvii. 5. and her many daughters; all which pretend to be the true churches of Chriſt, but want that life in themſelves, and that union in ſpirit with him, which alone can make ſuch.

Queſt. *What makes a true church?*

Anſ. That alone which makes a ſpiritual body, and which unites that body to the head. There muſt be a true nature, and the union of that nature to the head, or there cannot be a marriage in ſpirit to the Lamb. Now the true church is Chriſt's ſpouſe, *bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh*, as truly of the ſeed of Abraham after the ſpirit, as the Jews were after the fleſh. And *as he that ſaith he is a Jew*, but wanteth the true circumciſion of the heart and ſpirit, doth but lie, and is not indeed ſo; ſo *they that ſay they are a church*, but want the nature of the *church*, they alſo lie, and are not a true gathering of Chriſtians out of the world, but a ſynagogue of Satan, ſtill abiding and worſhipping in the ſpirit of the world. Rev. ii. 9. and chap. iii. 9.

Queſt. *May not the true church be known by outward viſible marks, as moſt perſons deſcribe and ſeek to find and diſtinguiſh her by?*

Anſ. No; not poſſibly in her wilderneſs-ſtate, nor hardly in her built-ſtate.

Queſt. *Why not poſſibly in her wilderneſs-ſtate?*

Anſ. Becauſe there ſhe is ſtripped of them, and the harlots, or falſe churches, are clothed with them. Mark the thing: In the very apoſtles days, the falſe miniſters and falſe Chriſtians got into the form, and denied the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Now after a ſeaſon God leaves the form to them, Rev. xi. 2. gathering his church out of that appearance into the hidden power. Here is the wilderneſs into which the church fled; the life, the power, which before appeared in the form, being withdrawn and ſeparated from the form, and the living ſeed gathered into it, and worſhipping in it. And who can now find the church, or learn

learn the worſhip? Here the eye of the ſeed is tried, and the wiſdom of the ſpirit of the true diſciple. And here, ever ſince, all the world have been jangling about the form, while the true witneſſes have been mourning after the power, teſtifying concerning the power, and enjoying what was to be given forth of it, in the preſent way of its diſpenſation in the wilderneſs.

Queſt. *Why hardly in her built-ſtate?*

Anſ. Becauſe even then ſuch variety of reſemblances and likeneſſes of the true church may be built, as cannot be diſtinguiſhed from the true itſelf by any outward marks. There were in the apoſtles days falſe apoſtles, falſe miniſters, and falſe churches; which though they appeared as the apoſtles of Chriſt, as the miniſters of righteouſneſs, as the churches of Chriſt, yet they were not ſo, but falſe prophets, deceitful workers, and ſynagogues of Satan. Now they which intend to deceive, appear moſt exactly in the form, and with the outward marks, if need require; and that which is true and ſubſtantial, is not ſo regardful of the outward form, but minds the inward life, truth, and ſubſtance. He therefore that judges by the form and outward marks, cannot but judge that to be the true ſpouſe which appears moſt in the form, and with the outward marks, and ſo is very liable to be deceived and err, by judging ſome of the falſe churches to be true, and the true to be falſe.

Queſt. *What am I to do when I know the true church?*

Anſ. To wait in that which gives to be a member of it, and gives true union with it, whether it be in the wilderneſs-ſtate, or in its built-ſtate. For the ſame Spirit, which begets the child in the true life, will alſo lead to the church; and in that wiſdom which is from above the true church will never be miſſed of; but in the earthly reaſonings and gueſſings of man's wiſdom, God's church (or New Teſtament-building in the power of his Spirit) is eaſily miſſed. And he that miſſeth of this, and is out of the pale of it,

it, is it poſſible he ſhould meet with the true ſalvation? "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" and he that hath but ſo much as the heart of a man, let him conſider, for the thing is of great weight, and of deep concernment to the ſoul.

Well: have but patience a while, and the true church (which God's Spirit builds) ſhall be known, and all the falſe churches of mens building ſhall be known alſo. And that which God hath built ſhall have the power from God, and the praiſe among men; and all the Babyloniſh buildings of man's confuſed ſpirit, and inconſiſtent wiſdom, ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoke, and become a ſtink in all noſtrils. For ſtrong is the Lord God of heaven and earth, who is confounding Babylon in all her gaudy attire, and glorious appearances, and raiſing up his Sion out of the duſt. *Amen, hallelujah!*

SOME FURTHER

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS,

CONCERNING THE

SEED of ISRAEL.

Queſt. *OUT of what womb doth the ſeed of Iſrael ſpring?*

Anſ. Out of the nature of eternal life, out of the boſom of eternal love, out of the Jeruſalem which is above, which is free, and the mother of all that are born of the Spirit.

Queſt. *By what covenant are the children of Iſrael brought up?*

Anſ. By the covenant of faith in the love of the Father, which gives life and ſtrength to obey.

Queſt. *Is there obedience required in the new covenant?*

Anſ. Yes; the obedience of faith, the ſubjection of the nature and heart of the child, to the nature and will of the Father; which is as fully natural in the ſubſtance, as it can be repreſented in any figure or ſhadow.

Queſt. *What if there be diſobedience?*

Anſ. The ſeed itſelf cannot diſobey; but the veſſel in which it is ſown, and to which it is united, may prove weak, frail, brittle, yea ſometimes ſtubborn; the weight and chaſtiſement whereof the ſeed alſo bears, and in patient ſuffering helps and cleanſes the veſſel through the virtue of the blood of Jeſus, which is felt in the ſeed which comes from Jeſus. And here is the blood of ſprinkling known in the ſoul, which cleanſes

cleanſes the conſcience from dead works, and waſhes away the iniquity thereof.

Queſt. *Can any fall from this covenant?*

Anſ. The covenant is with the ſeed for ever, and with the ſeed's ſeed alſo is it firm; but the ſtreamings forth of the light of the covenant do not always beget a ſeed, but only ſometimes ſet man's nature on work, drawing forth the faith, love, and obedience thereof. Now this will not hold. All fleſh is graſs, and at one time or other will fade and wither; but there muſt be a being begotten of the Word, to live and abide for ever.

Queſt. *How is this begetting?*

Anſ. In the weakening of man's ſtrength day by day, and raiſing up the ſeed, which ſeed gives life and ſtrength to him that is weakened in the manhood.

Queſt. *How is this done?*

Anſ. Firſt by drawing forth what is in the man, and then by trying its ſtrength, diſtreſſing the man with exerciſes beyond him. Thus the working man is brought down by the requirings of the law, they being too hard for him, and the believing ſeed is raiſed up; who in the virtue of the living faith (whereof he receiveth ſupplies from the breath of eternal life) fulfils the righteouſneſs of the law in the man, and alſo communicates a righteouſneſs of an higher nature unto him.

Queſt. *Why doth God take this courſe with man?*

Anſ. It is proper and natural. How can an higher principle be raiſed in man, but by the death of the former? And how can the former die, but by ſuch exerciſes, trials, and diſtreſſes as are proper to wear out the ſtrength of its nature, and bring it into the nothingneſs, where that which is, ſprings up; when it hath brought down that which appeared, but was not?

Oh! who can underſtand God's works in the world? Who can read the myſtery of life and death in man? Oh! what a worm is man before his God! What is

his nature? In what ſtate is he able to walk with his God? God can keep covenant with man in any kind of diſpenſation: but man ſtill fails; his heart deceives him, and he is not able to attain unto, or maintain any conſiderable proportion of, happineſs to his ſoul by his covenant.

Queſt. *What is man's covenant?*

Anſ. That which his nature deſires of God to make him happy. That light, that counſel, that ſtrength, that preſence which his nature thinks ſufficient, will not carry him through. Nay, let God ſhew grace and mercy, and add helps unto him in the riches of his love, yet this will not do. How doth man fall in every diſpenſation, where there is any ſtreſs laid on this covenant, though God is able to be a father and an huſband therein!

Queſt. *What is God's covenant?*

Anſ. That which his nature ſees needful to make man happy in him, and to keep man in the enjoyment of his happineſs. This, ſo far as it is diſpenſed, carries through; and when it is diſpenſed perfectly, will bring forth the perfect redemption and happineſs of the creature.

Now then that ſoul that would travel towards life eternal;

Firſt, Wait to feel a principle of life awakened, raiſed up, ſown in thy earth by the living God.

Secondly, Wait to receive all the light of life in every kind, that the Father of lights ſhall pleaſe to cauſe to ſhine in thy heart, from this principle.

Thirdly, Be content to be tried and diſtreſſed, and have thy ſtrength broken day by day, and thy wiſdom confounded, that thou mayeſt ſink into, and paſs away in, the weakneſs and fooliſhneſs which the Lord will bring upon thee, before the wiſdom and ſtrength of his life appear in thee.

Fourthly, Keep thine eye and heart on the grace that firſt viſited thee, that there thy footing may be, and thy hopes faſtened. Oh! receive the light ſtill from

from the hand of grace, and look up thither for ſtrength to obey the light; that the earthly man get not a life in the obedience, and thou forget the grace, and thy need of Chriſt the anointed of the Lord; and ſo thou live on what thou haſt received from God, and not Chriſt live in thee; and look upon thy working obedience as the righteouſneſs, and feel not the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is the free juſtification of his life and power, waſhing away the guilt of the ungodly!

Ah! narrow is the path that leads unto life; none can enter in at it, but the Seed, and the Seed's ſeed; even that which dies in the creatureſhip, in the principle which Adam received from the Lord, and ſprings up in the nature and being of this ſeed.

Read this, Oh! travellers towards the holy land, with the eye which God creates! that ye may run certainly in his begettings, in his creatings, in his leadings towards his land of eternal reſt; even in the certain law and power of his endleſs life, and not in the uncertain reaſonings, imaginings, and gueſſings at things by the human underſtanding.

TO

All ſuch as Complain that they want POWER: Not applying themſelves to yield Subjection to what of GOD is made manifeſt in them, upon a Pretence of waiting for Power ſo to do.

THE Lord God of eternal power, who made man in his own image, he ſtretcheth forth his arm to ſave and redeem his loſt creature; it is his power alone that effecteth the work of redemption; he quickeneth man, who is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; he keepeth alive, and leadeth on the quickened ſoul in the path of life; he conquereth, ſcattereth, and ſubdueth all the enemies round about the ſoul, even all the luſts, corruptions, and temptations, which lead unto, and entangle in, perdition.

Yet the Lord God requireth ſomewhat of the man whom he ſaveth, without which being found in man, and returned to him from man, he ſaveth him not.

Queſt. *What doth he require of man?*

Anſ. He requireth of man, *repentance, faith, and obedience.* That he ſhould turn at his call, from the darkneſs to the light; that he ſhould truſt in, and cleave to, the light, but believe the ſpirit of darkneſs no more; and laſtly, That he ſhould obey the light, follow the light, walk in the footſteps of the living towards the land of light; work the works of God in the light.

Queſt. *How can man do this?*

Anſ. Of himſelf he cannot; but being touched, being quickened by the eternal power, being turned by

by a ſecret virtue and ſtirring of the life in his heart, then he can turn towards that which turneth him. Being drawn by the life, by the power; he can follow after the life, and after the power. Finding the ſweetneſs of the living vine, and his ſoul made alive by the ſap of the vine, his heart can now cleave to, and abide in, the vine, and bring forth the fruit of the living faith and obedience to the huſbandman, who daily dreſſeth the heart, that waiteth in the living principle for further life from the fountain, that it may bring forth the fruits of life more and more.

Now mark: Is it poſſible for any man to come to the eternal reſt, that travels not in the path? Or is there any path, but the repentance, faith, and obedience of the living ſpirit; even of the child begotten by the eternal power, who is taught by the Father to abide and walk in the life and in the power?

God putteth forth his hand all the day long, to fetch home loſt man. He hath given him a talent, a living talent, which is able to work man into life, and to bring forth the fruits of life in man. Man overlooks the talent, joins not his heart to it, brings not forth the fruits of life to the giver, but cries he wants power; and *what is he? What can he do? Can he cleanſe his own heart? Can he kill his corruptions? Can he quicken himſelf?* &c.

Now mark again. There are ſeveral diſpenſations of God to mankind; in all which, man (of himſelf) falls ſhort of the life, of the power, of the glory, and comes under condemnation. God lays the blame on man, for not hearkening, for not believing, for not walking with him. Man lays the blame on God, and ſays he wants power. Look on him who is not obedient to the light, which he cannot but confeſs to ſhine in his heart, and often to reprove him; aſk him why he doth not obey it? Is not this his plea; *that he wants power?* Now let men conſider, will this ſtand before the throne of God? This is the condemnation, that men do not believe the light of life, do not obey the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, do not

truſt and follow the light which would lead them to life, but truſt and follow the darkneſs, which leads into death, and into everlaſting condemnation. Their plea is, *they want power ſo to do.* Is this true?

I confeſs the power doth not ſo flow forth to man, as man expects it; but the power of life works man out of death in a myſtery, and begins in him as weakneſs. There is all the ſtrength, all the power of the enemy, againſt the work of God in the heart. There is but a little thing, (like a grain of muſtard-ſeed) a weak thing, a fooliſh thing, even that which is not, (to man's eye) to overcome all this; and yet in this is the power. And here is the great deceit of man; he looks for a great manifeſt power in or upon him to begin with, and doth not ſee how the power is in the little weak ſtirrings of life in the heart, in the riſing up of ſomewhat againſt the mighty ſtrength of corruption in him; which he returning towards, cleaving to, and waiting upon the Lord in, the ſtrength of the Lord will be made manifeſt in its ſeaſon, and he will be drawn nearer and nearer to the Lord, and his enemies be overcome and fall he knows not how. But he that waits for ſuch a mighty appearance of power at firſt, looking ſo to begin, and after that manner to be preſerved and carried on, can never in this capacity ſo much as walk in the path eternal; nor is not in the way of receiving the power, which ſprings up as weakneſs, and leads on and overcomes enemies in a myſterious way of working, and not in ſuch a manifeſt and direct way of conqueſt, as man's wiſdom expects.

The ſeed of the kingdom is ſown man knows not how, even by a ſound of the eternal Spirit, which he is not a fit judge of; and it grows up he knows not how; and the power appears and works in it, in a way that he is not aware of. He looks for the kingdom, the power, and the life, in a way of his obſervation, anſwerable to the thoughts and expectations of his heart. But thus it never comes; but in the way of its own eternal motion, it ſprings in the hearts

of

of many, and they overlook the thing, and turn from it daily, not knowing its proper way of appearance, but expecting it ſome other way. And thus the enemy holds them in the bands of death, and they are captives in the ſtrange land, refuſing the Prince of life, in his daily offers of life, becauſe they look not for him thus, but after another way and manner. And till this eye of obſervation be put out in them, they can never clearly ſee the appearance of the Saviour to them, nor feel the efficacy of his ſaving of them from that, from which none but he can deliver.

Now for the ſakes of ſuch as are ſingle-hearted, and yet with-held from the enjoyment of the life of God and of his pure power, through a way of wrong expecting it; I ſhall ſay a little concerning the operation of the power in quickening and leading on the quickened ſoul, as alſo concerning the way of its ſpringing up in the heart, and the neceſſity of this way. I myſelf was long with-held from obedience to the light eternal, in its low appearance of diſcovering and convincing of ſin, through this very deceit, believing that my condition required the manifeſt appearance of a very great power to help me; and ſo when ſin overcame me, I did only mourn over it, crying after and waiting for power, but was kept from joining with, and cleaving to that, wherein the power ſprings up and manifeſts itſelf according to its own pleaſure, quite contrary to the way of man's expectation.

The operations of the power are divers and gradual, according to the condition and neceſſity of the ſoul whom it viſits, and reacheth forth its hand unto.

1. There is a diſcovery of the darkneſs, and of the erring of the heart from God. This is power; for this ſhould never be in any heart, could all the powers of darkneſs there withſtand it.

2. There is a riſing of the heart againſt the evil, with a deſire of deliverance from it, and of the ſpringing up of the good in ſuch power as might conquer it. This is a further appearance of power than the

the former, and a good beginning towards believing or joining with the redeeming arm, which all the powers of darkneſs (with all manner of ſubtilty) endeavour to divert the heart from.

3. There is an upright frame of ſpirit begotten, and a truth of heart formed towards the Lord; from which deſires, and cries, and groans after his life and preſence, and for deliverance from the enemy, and from under the power of his deceit, ſpring more and more.

4. There is a fear begotten in the heart of being deceived by the enemy, of being drawn from the feeling of, and panting after, the life and power of God.

5. There is an hope and truſt in the Lord's goodneſs and mercy, with a daily waiting for his appearance, for the manifeſtation of his Spirit and pure preſence, and for the ſpringings up of his freſh life and precious virtue.

6. There are overturnings of the enemy, battering down his ſtrong-holds, breaking of many ſnares, beating back of many furious aſſaults, and cauſing the plant of life to grow up and triumph over all the powers of darkneſs.

7. There are ſecret ſtayings and upholdings of the heart in the hour of darkneſs, when God ſees neceſſary to let forth the power thereof upon the ſoul, and to eclipſe his own power. When the enemy buffets, tempts, prevails, and gets ground upon the ſoul, is drawing it back under the veil, even into the pit, and nothing appears near to ſtop it or reſcue the ſoul from death, and from the power of the grave, but the ſting thereof enters and deeply wounds the ſoul; yet even then the power is near, ſecretly upholding, preſerving, and watching over the ſoul; and waiting for the proper ſeaſon of deliverance. "Nevertheleſs I am "continually with thee, thou haſt holden me by my "right hand," ſaid David, when his feet had almoſt ſlipped into the grievous ſnare of deſperate unbelief, and

and murmuring againſt God's dealings with him and the reſt of his people.

Many more operations of the power might be mentioned, even of its tabernacling and glorious appearing in ſome veſſels in various ways, both delighting itſelf in the heart, and alſo filling the heart with delight and joy in the pure life: but theſe things are better enjoyed and ſweetly felt, in the ſilence of the fleſhly part, than ſpoken of to that ear which is not fit to hear the ſound thereof.

Secondly, *The way of the power's ſpringing up in the heart*; which is,

1. In its turning from the darkneſs, in the faith, and in the pure obedience which flows from the faith. For as the ſoul turns from the power of darkneſs and death, towards the power of the eternal Spirit of light; ſo the power meets it, embraces it, appears to it, and manifeſts itſelf in it, proportionable to its preſent capacity and condition. And as the ſoul, being touched with the living virtue, gives itſelf up to believe, and to truſt the power which draws; ſo the power manifeſts itſelf in the heart, according to the proportion of the faith which the eternal virtue hath begotten there. And as the ſoul in the faith gives itſelf up to obey, ſo the power appears and works the obedience. For we can do nothing of ourſelves; but being called, being drawn, being required to do that which is far beyond our ſtrength, and giving up thereto; the life ſprings, the power appears, which does the work. This the Philippians had experience of, to whom the apoſtle gave that exhortation; "Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure." It is the unbeliever hangs back, and cries, Where ſhall I have power? But the faith follows the moving and drawing of the Spirit, and the power never fails the faith. But that which cries, how ſhall I get out of Egypt? *Which way ſhall I ever be able to paſs through this intricate wilderneſs? How ſhall I overcome thoſe mighty enemies, which*

which already have the poſſeſſion of the land I ſhould inherit, and are ſtrongly fenced in it, and mighty in ſtrength to keep their hold thereof? This is not the right ſeed, this is not the true Iſrael, for whom the everlaſting inheritance of the life and of the pure power is prepared.

2. Under the croſs, under the yoke to the corrupt, (yea, and to the very natural) the power ſprings. The falſe birth would have the power ſpring in a way pleaſing to itſelf; at the time its wiſdom ſees neceſſary, and in the way its will would have it; but the power ſprings up according to its own wiſdom, at its own time, and after its own way. When the man would have it, then it flies from him; and when it is not expected, nor perhaps deſired, (at leaſt in that way wherein it chooſes to appear) then it ſprings up and puts forth itſelf. Moſt men, that have felt any thing of God, cannot but deſire his life and power; but moſt fly the croſs, wherein it hath choſen to appear; and ſo they can never meet with it, but are ſtill complaining for the want of it. In the power is the eaſe, the reſt of the goſpel. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me,* ſaith Chriſt, *and ye ſhall find the reſt which flows from the power.* This made Paul rejoice in the croſs of Chriſt, whereby the fleſhly luſts were brought down in him; and the life and eternal power ſprang in the ſeed of the kingdom: for under the croſs the ſeed grows up and flouriſhes, and the fleſh withers and dies. And as the power of fleſh and death waſtes, ſo the power of Spirit and life increaſes.

3. The power ſprings under the fear, and in the uprightneſs and love which God hath begotten. I put theſe together, for there is a cloſe unity between them. The fear is the dwelling of the upright heart, and the love is within the fear. He that diſtruſts himſelf, feels his own nothingneſs, finds no power to do any thing God requireth, and yet alſo fears to ſtay behind the light of God's Spirit, in any thing it requires, and ſo finds a putting on forwards in the faith; in him the power delights to appear. He that would feel ſtrength before-hand, and act in the ſenſe of that

ſtrength,

ſtrength, from him the power withdraws; but he that is weak, and hath no ſtrength, but ſtill as it freely drops into him from moment to moment, this is the veſſel the power chooſeth to manifeſt itſelf to, and to be continually appearing in. This is the new covenant, "I will put my fear in their hearts." And where the fear of the new covenant is found, ſo much life, power, and eternal virtue, as is neceſſary for the preſent ſtate of that heart, cannot be far off. So in the *upright-hearted*, in the heart that is true to God, the power of deceit cannot dwell, but the power of truth delights to fill it, in a way ſuitable to the ſtate of the ſpirit, and ſo as may be ſeen by the eye of the ſpirit, and felt by the ſpiritual ſenſe. And in the love is the conſtraining power, which conſtrains from the evil path, from the path of unbelief and diſobedience, into the path of life.

Thirdly, *The neceſſity of this way of the ſpringing up of the power*, and not in ſuch a manifeſt way as man's heart deſires, and as man's eye expects.

It is neceſſary in ſeveral reſpects. *In reſpect of God, in reference to the creature, and in reference to the ſoul's enemies.*

1. *In reſpect of God.* It is neceſſary that his power and life ſhould ſpring up in the creature in its own way, according to the counſel of his own wiſdom, ſuitable to his own nature, and not in the way which the creature chalks out and expects it in. God muſt be like himſelf, and walk in his own path in every thing he does. He is a God that hideth himſelf in the myſtery of his working, throughout the whole track of man's redemption; and man muſt be wrought out of himſelf, out of his own thoughts, expectations, gathered apprehenſions concerning the kingdom and way to life, and led in a path he doth not know, (nor ever can know any longer than he is in it) and in ways he hath not been acquainted with. The way of life is ſtill new, every moment freſh and living; and the earthly part of thoſe, who may have in ſome meaſure felt the power of regeneration, cannot know it, nor walk

walk in it. Consider this, O ye that fence yourselves against the present appearance of the Spirit; and against the convictions, demonstrations, and drawings of its eternal light and power, by somewhat which ye have formerly felt and known.

2. *In reference to the creature*, the power of God must needs appear thus hiddenly, and in such a mysterious way.

1. That the creature might go through all those exercises of spirit, which are necessary to fit it for its inheritance in the holy land. There are *straits, wants, trials, temptations, inward weaknesses, buffettings from the enemy, withdrawings of the life, &c.* God seeth necessary to exercise the spirits of his with, that he might fit them for himself, and for a safe enjoyment of his life in fulness; which could not be, if there were such a manifest power to begin with, and continually at hand, to perform all in and for the soul, as many men wait for and think necessary to have.

2. That the fleshly part might be thoroughly worn out and destroyed. When the power appears and works mightily in the soul, there is somewhat apt to get up, to exalt himself by the power, and to abuse the power; and if the power were not withdrawn, and this tormented and famished in the absence of the power, and in the withdrawing of the sweet appearance of life, a wrong thing would be stealing into the inheritance, and the soul would never be thoroughly purified, nor come to a pure enjoyment of the power. Therefore doth the Lord appear in this mysterious way, *that the promise might be sure to the seed*; that the seed which is the right heir of the power, might come alone to inherit the power, and the false birth not touch the least enjoyment of it, but feel the bitter strokes of death and destruction from it. What had become of Paul, if he had had power to resist the buffettings of the enemy, as he desired? Would not his fleshly part have remained in the exaltation, and not have been brought down? 2 Cor. xii. 7.

3. *In*

3. *In reference to the enemy.* The enemy could never be wholly conquered, his ſtrong holds in the heart broken down, and the redemption from under his hand perfected, were it not for this myſterious way of the appearing and working of the power, even out of the ſight of man's eye, and contrary to his will and expectation. For had man ſuch a power as he deſires, ſtill preſent with him; had he faith in his power, or obedience in his power, or could he take up the croſs in his power, or have ſtrength to fight againſt the enemy as he deſires and expects, the enemy would ſtill find entrance into him, and keep his hold of him. But God, who knoweth the ſtate of the creature, with the ſtrength and paſſages of the enemy into man, by working with his mighty power in man according to his own will, and in the way of his own wiſdom, (contrary to what man can deſire or expect, but as he is taken into, and comprehended in, the eternal will) carries on his work ſweetly, and ſafely, and perfects the ſalvations of thoſe who will not, who run not, who deſire not to be any thing, but wait to feel and know his power, and to become ſubject to it, and lie under, even in the loweſt way of its manifeſtation and appearance.

Object. *This may be true in the ordinary way of redemption of ſouls; but there are deep captivities (even the captivity of Babylon inwardly, ſpiritually) which ſurely will need a very great appearance of the power of God to deliver out of; and what can that ſoul do, but wait there under the captivity, until the mighty power ariſe?*

Anſ. It is true; the power muſt needs be very great, and the appearance of it wonderful, which delivers out of ſuch captivity; but yet the beginnings of it may be ſmall, and out of the ſight of that eye which looks and waits for ſo great an appearance. Haſt thou not light enough already to begin thy travel out of Babylon? Haſt thou begun thy travel? Doſt thou walk in the light which ſhineth upon thee in that dark land,

land, to gather and lead thee of it? Or wilt thou not begin to come out, till the very glory and brightneſs of Sion ſhine upon thee? If there be but light and power enough to lead thee one ſtep out of the land of darkneſs and confuſion of ſpirit, towards obedience to the loweſt or meaneſt truth, that is ſufficient for thee at preſent; and as thou art found faithful here, more will ſpring in thee; but if thou ſtop here, (or at any time after thou haſt begun and made ſome progreſs, becauſe of any thing which falleth out contrary to thy expectation) then that which ſhould lead thee on, and ſtrengthen thee, ſtops alſo; and thou meeteſt not with that which is found and enjoyed by others in the way, becauſe thou paſſeſt not on in it, but balkeſt thy proper path, judging ſomewhat more neceſſary towards thy beginning or progreſs, than the Lord judgeth, or yet ſeeth fit to impart to thee.

Thus the enemy betrays thee, and holds thee in his chains, which might be looſed and caſt off by little and little, didſt thou ſingly give up to the little appearance of that light and power which is able to unbind them, and not expect more at firſt (or afterwards) than the Lord hath allotted for thy preſent condition. And let me tell thee this from certain knowledge and experience; that thou, who haſt been high, and haſt taſted much of God, but haſt abuſed it, and fed the wrong part with it, both in thyſelf and others; thou muſt be brought lower than the reſt, and for a long ſeaſon be kept lower; that the pure ſeed (which hath deeply been buried in thee) may overgrow and ſink all thy knowledge, experiences, and obſervations, concerning the eternal life, and its way of appearance, which formerly thou hadſt ſome true taſte of, but now holdeſt out of the life.

Thou muſt come down, thou muſt become nothing by degrees, thou muſt lie at the foot of the reprovings of that light, which thou thinkeſt thou haſt gone far beyond, and be glad of a little help now and then in the lowlineſs and humility of thy heart, which muſt

not

not chooſe what appearance and manifeſtation it will have from God, before it will begin to follow him, but be glad of ever ſo little, that the infinite wiſdom ſees good to give forth by the hand of his mercy.

Whoever have been high, and are ſtill waiting and expecting in the heights of their own wiſdom and obſervations concerning the kingdom, let them take heed *of deſpiſing the day of ſmall things*, and know that their proper beginning (yea the very path of eternal life itſelf) lies in the lowneſs, in the humility, even in that nothingneſs which bows before the leaſt light of the day, and with gladneſs of heart enters into, and walks in it. For this I certainly know; the wiſe, the obſerving eye, the vaſt comprehending heart, which waits for ſuch an extraordinary power, judging it cannot begin following the light, which daily appears to check and reprove, without ſome great manifeſt appearance of power; this cannot ſee the low little path of life, which is proper for it to walk in, and to the end whereof it muſt travel, if ever it come to ſit down in the kingdom, or to inherit the power of the endleſs life. Precious is the diſpenſation of this age, great is the power and glory which is ariſing; but the wiſe and knowing of this age are ſhut out of it, as they have been out of the life and truth of the diſpenſations of God in all ages. Happy is he who is not above that, wherewith God viſiteth his ſoul to redeem it.

POSTSCRIPT.

THAT perſons, who have not travelled into the land of life, want power, that is out of doubt. The ſtate of Iſrael in its travels, is a ſtate of weakneſſes and wants. How can they in the wilderneſs but want that, which is to be poſſeſſed in the Holy Land? But doſt thou want power to begin the travel with? Doſt thou want what proportion of power the Lord ſees neceſſary for thee in thy preſent eſtate? Is there nothing at all diſcovered to thee which is contrary to God, either in thy heart, or in thy converſation, or in thy worſhip, which thou doſt not ſo much as ſtrive to give up to the Lord in, waiting upon him for his power and ſtrength to appear in helping thee? The light appears to diſcover and lead out of the darkneſs: now in giving up to the light, and not doubting but that which calls and draws out will give ſtrength, and enable to come out, the power is met with unawares. But that which ſtands gazing and looking out after a power, which it expects to meet with, before it will ſo much as begin to follow the light; that cannot but abide in the captivity, and miſs of that power which redeemeth from it. Therefore,

1. Wait to feel the light of life diſcovering and drawing from the evil; and let it chooſe what it ſhall pleaſe firſt to diſcover and draw from. And though it be little, and very inconſiderable in thine eyes, yet diſpute not, but where the light firſt begins to lead, do thou there begin to follow.

Then in this waiting and ſubjecting to the manifeſtations of the light, out of the ſelf-will, ſelf-wiſdom, ſelf-knowledge, ſelf-judgment, in the lowlineſs and abaſedneſs of the mind and ſpirit before the Lord, the beget-

begettings of life in the light are felt, and the renewing into his pure image.

Afterwards that which is begotten (and begun to be renewed in the divine image) is by degrees taught more diſtinctly to know, diſcern, and walk in the path of life.

And after this, to that which is thus begotten, and taught the living faith and obedience, (which is wrought by the mighty power of God, though running in a low, ſecret, hidden way, from the eye of the creature) the great power is revealed, and he grows ſtrong in the power *for God*, and againſt the enemies of his ſoul; and by this ſtrength and feeling of God's preſence, they *fall daily and continually before him*, and then his victory over them goes on with joy.

But he that ſtops at firſt may grow wiſe and conceited, concerning the things of the kingdom after the fleſh, and may hope for great things at laſt; but by the deceit of the ſubtilty, is kept out of the living path, wherein they are to be waited for, reaped, and enjoyed.

Now for the encouragement of ſuch as are willing to travel on in the weakneſs, yielding up their members to the preſent manifeſtation of the light, and waiting for the further appearance of the power; it is on my heart to add a letter of a dear friend and brother of mine in the truth, who hath been a deep traveller and fellow-ſufferer with me formerly, before this help came forth from the throne of God, ſince the day-ſpring from on high hath vouchſafed to viſit us, and to guide our feet in the way of everlaſting peace.

The LETTER is as followeth;

Dear FRIEND,

"MY dear and tender love ſalutes thee, in "that love from whence I had my being, "and from whence ſprang all my Father's children,

" who are born from above, heirs of an everlaſt-
" ing inheritance. Oh! how ſweet and pleaſant
" are the paſtures which my Father cauſeth all his
" ſheep to feed in; there is variety of plenty in
" his paſtures, milk for babes, and ſtrong meat for
" them of riper age, and wine to refreſh thoſe that
" are ready to faint, even the wine of the kingdom,
" that makes glad the heart, when it is ready to
" faint, by reaſon of the infirmities. Sure I am,
" none can be ſo weary, but he takes care of them;
" nor none ſo nigh fainting, but he puts his arm
" under their heads; nor none can be ſo beſet with
" enemies on every ſide, but he will ariſe and ſcat-
" ter; nor none ſo heavy laden and big with young,
" but he takes notice of them, and gently leads
" them, and will not leave them behind unto the
" mercileſs wolf, becauſe they are his own, and his
" life is the price of their redemption, and his
" blood of their ranſom; and if they be ſo young
" that they cannot go, he carries them in his arms;
" and when they can feel nothing ſtirring after
" him, his bowels yearn after them; ſo tender is
" this good Shepherd after his flock. I can tell, for
" I was as one that once went aſtray, and wandered
" upon the barren mountains; and when I had
" wearied myſelf with wandering, I went into the
" wilderneſs, and there I was torn as with briars,
" and pricked as with thorns, ſometimes thinking
" this was the way, and ſometimes concluding that
" was the way, and by and by concluding all was
" out of the way; and then bitter mourning came
" upon me, and weeping for want of the interpre-
" ter; for when I ſought to know what was the
" matter, and where I was, it was too hard for
" me. Then I thought I would venture on ſome
" way where it was moſt likely to find a loſt God,
" and I would pray with them that prayed, and
" faſt with them that faſted, and mourn with them
" that mourned, if by any means I might come to
" reſt, but found it not, until I came to ſee the

" candle

" candle lighted in my own houſe, and my heart
" ſwept from thoſe thoughts and imaginations, and
" willings, and runnings, and to die unto them
" all, not heeding of them, but watching againſt
" them, leſt I ſhould let my mind go a whoring
" after them. And here I dwelt for a time as in a
" deſolate land uninhabited, where I ſat alone as a
" ſparrow upon the houſe-top, and was hunted up
" and down like a patridge upon the mountains,
" and could reſt no where, but ſome luſt or thought
" or other followed me at the heels, and diſquieted
" me night and day, until I came to know him in
" whom was reſt, and no occaſion of ſtumbling,
" in whom the devil hath no part; and he became
" unto me as a hiding-place from the ſtorms, and
" from the tempeſts. Then came my eyes to ſee
" my Saviour, and my ſorrow fled away, and he
" became made unto me all in all, my wiſdom, my
" righteouſneſs, and my ſanctification; in whom I was
" and am complete, to the praiſe of the riches of
" his grace and goodneſs that endures for ever.
" Therefore be not diſcouraged, O thou toſſed as
" with tempeſts! nor diſmayed in thyſelf; becauſe
" thou ſeeſt ſuch mighty hoſts of enemies riſing up
" againſt thee, and beſetting thee on every ſide:
" for none was ſo beſet and tried, and tempted,
" as the true Seed was, who was a man of ſorrows,
" and acquainted with grief. But be thou ſtill in
" thy mind, and let the billows paſs over, and wave
" upon wave; and fret not thyſelf becauſe of them,
" neither be caſt down, as if it ſhould never be
" otherwiſe with thee: ſorrow comes at night, but
" joy in the morning; and the days of thy mourn-
" ing ſhall be over, and the accuſer will God caſt
" out for ever. For therefore was I afflicted, and
" not comforted, and tempted, and tried, for this
" end, that I might know how to ſpeak a word in
" due ſeaſon, unto thoſe who are tempted and af-
" flicted as I once was; as it was ſaid unto me in
" that day when ſorrow lay heavy upon me. There-

" fore be not diſconſolated, neither give heed unto
" the reaſonings and diſputings of thy own heart;
" nor the fears that riſe therefrom, but be ſtrong
" in the faith, believing in the light which lets thee
" ſee them, and his grace thou wilt know to be
" ſufficient for thee, and his ſtrength to be made
" perfect in thy weakneſs. And ſo thou rather wilt
" glory in thy infirmities, that his power may reſt
" upon thee, than in thy earneſt deſires to be rid
" of them; for by theſe things thou wilt come to
" live in the life of God, and joy in God, and
" glory in tribulation, when thou haſt learned in
" all conditions to be contented: and through tri-
" als, and deep exerciſes, is the way to learn this
" leſſon. Theſe things in dear love to thee I have
" written, being ſomewhat ſenſible of thy condi-
" tion, and the many ſnares thou art daily liable
" unto; therefore watch that thou fall not into
" temptation, and my God and Father keep thee
" in the arms of eternal love, over all, unto the
" end, unto his praiſe; Amen.

JOHN CROOKE."

SOME

SOME

QUERIES

TO THE

Strict and zealous Profeſſors of this Age, (ſuch as ſtick in the Letter, but are Strangers to the Life and Power) to provoke them to Jealouſy, leſt the Heathen and open Sinners outſtrip them, and enter into the Kingdom of the pure everlaſting Light before them.

Query I. WHETHER God, ſince the fall of man from the purity and glory of his ſtate, doth truly and really deſire the ſalvation of all mankind; and ſo would have them come to the knowledge of the truth, that they might believe it, receive it, walk in it, and ſo obtain ſalvation thereby? Or whether he would have only ſome few of them to receive it, and be ſaved, and the reſt to periſh?

Query II. If God would have all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, which is the means of ſalvation, then whether there is ſufficient done by God to convey the knowledge of his truth to all men, ſo as they may come to the knowledge thereof, and be ſaved? Or whether there is ſuch a defect on God's part, that ſome men never had ſufficient means to come ſo far to the knowledge of his truth, as that they might come into that way of ſalvation thereby?

Query III. Though God doth pleaſe to add ſuper-abundant means, in the riches of his grace, to-

wards ſome, more than others; as to the Jews under the law, and to the diſciples of Chriſt under the goſpel; yet whether there is not ſo much light of the Spirit communicated to all, as, if followed, might lead them out of the darkneſs, and from under the power of it?

Query IV. Whether God be not ſo near to every man, as that poſſibly he may ſeek after him, and find him? And if he do not find him, and his heart cleave to him, whether it can poſſibly be but virtue ſhould iſſue forth from God, to draw him out of the alienation from him, and out of the power of ſin, death, and hell?

Query V. Whether, if a man feel God, and cleave to God, and begin to diſcern the ſtreamings of light from him, and follow the Lord therein, whether God will not accept this man therein? And whether his divine light let into him (being believed in and obeyed) will not purify him from darkneſs, unbelief, and diſobedience? And whether God will not impute to this man what Chriſt performed on man's behalf in the fleſh, he being in unity with, and in ſubjection to, the light and power whereby it was wrought, (wherein is the fellowſhip with the blood, and wherein alone it waſheth from the ſin) though as to the outward knowledge of what was outwardly done, the man may poſſibly be ignorant? And ſeeing it is not abſolutely neceſſary towards the involving in the guilt of Adam's ſin, the outward knowing what Adam did; but the proceeding from, and being found in, the ſame ſpirit and nature, doth ſufficiently convey it; ſo whether being gathered into, and found in, Chriſt's Spirit, even in faith, obedience, and ſubjection to the light thereof in the heart, whether this is not alſo ſufficient to convey the righteouſneſs of Chriſt? And whether God will fail to impute it to that man?

Query VI. Whether true religion, ſpiritual worſhip, and the ſalvation of the ſoul, do not depend upon the

the Spirit of the Lord, who is near to every heart with his eternal light, which he can eaſily conveyto any heart, whoſe ear is openedtohearken to his breathings and drawings? So that it is eaſy to the Lord to ſave any of the ſons of men, even in the darkeſt and remoteſt corners of the earth; and he can caſt off thoſe who ſeem higheſt in zeal, and moſt flouriſhing under any outward means of ſalvation.

Oh! wonderfully infinite is the Lord! Who ſhall bound his Spirit? Happy is he that feareth before him, and in his fear learneth to depart from iniquity, and walk in the good path that his Spirit teacheth. He is near to God, and ſhall taſte of the good things, and ſhall not be rejected for want of outward knowledge; but whatever was done for loſt man, he that is found in the light of life (and in the obedience to the Spirit of life) ſhall reap the benefit of; but he that boaſts in his knowledge of theſe things, and of his faith in Jeſus Chriſt, yet not being found in the true, living, eternal light of the Spirit, (but an enemy to it, and ignorant of it) the Lord will rend his confidence from him, in a day that he is not aware of.

Glorious was the diſpenſation of the law, and great was the advantage to the Jews thereby above the Gentiles; yet they miſſing the Spirit and life of it, (and growing wiſe in their own apprehenſions, and interpretations about it) fell beneath the Gentiles, becoming greater ſtrangers to the power and wiſdom of God, and harder to be reached and brought in under the ſubjection of the goſpel. More glorious was the diſpenſation of the goſpel to the Chriſtians, and much greater was their advantage than that of the Jews; but an apoſtaſy coming, and they loſing the true power and Spirit, and growing wiſe by a literal knowledge of ſome of the things of God in the earthly part, and forming interpretations of ſcriptures, and entering into practices in that wiſdom, they are now become at as great a diſtance from this powerful viſitation of God

God by his Spirit (which raiſeth the ſeed, and ſpringeth up freſhly in the hearts of thoſe whom the Lord our God doth call out of their fenced cities, and allure into the wilderneſs) as the Jews were at from that appearance before the apoſtaſy; and in as great danger are the children of the kingdom to be caſt out now as then. Oh! that my God would pleaſe to open the ear of ſome tender and upright-hearted among them to hear this teſtimony, that they might no longer ſtumble at that, which alone is able to lead them to God, and to make them happy in God.

Is there any uniting with God, or enjoying of God, but by his Spirit? Is there any receiving of God's Spirit but within the heart? Doth he not appear there by his light, and in his power? What if God pleaſe to give forth a meaſure of his eternal light in the heart of his choſen, to open that to them which they could never ſee before, and to bring them into a nearer unity with him than ever they knew before, may he not do it? Nay, is not ſuch a thing needful to help out of the deep and intricate apoſtaſy, wherein have been ſo many twiſtings and twinings of the ſubtil ſerpent about every ſtep or appearance of reformation, and to gather the wandering ſheep, who were ſcattered up and down, and ſorely diſtreſſed for want of the tongue of the learned to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to their eſtates and conditions? Have not every ſort bent the ſcriptures in the reaſonings of their own minds, and made them ſpeak according to their own hearts luſts? And is not every one wiſe in his own eyes, and ſtrong in his own tower and fenced city? Surely there was great need of an appearance of the Lord to ſhut out the wiſdom of man, and to help the poor, the needy, the fatherleſs, the weak panting babes. And bleſſed be the Lord God, who hath appeared; and bleſſed are thoſe who have ſeen his light, and bowed at the feet of his living appearance, and felt the virtue of his ſaving arm, ſcattering their luſts and corruptions; yea, alſo raiſing up and bringing forth his pure ſeed in the freſh power, dominion, and authority

of

of his perfect life, which reigneth in the hearts which the Lord hath regenerated and ſanctified for evermore.

O my friends, my friends! that that eye might be once blinded in you which hinders the ſight of God; and the eye opened which beholds his glory, and alſo taketh pleaſure in his loweſt appearance. The babe alone hath the myſteries of the kingdom revealed to him, (the wiſe and prudent are excluded; the birth after the fleſh, in every one, muſt be famiſhed and deſtroyed) and he alone can ſee in the eternal light this diſpenſation of the everlaſting goſpel after the apoſtaſy, which the Lord hideth from thoſe who are wiſe in the letter of the former diſpenſation of the ſame goſpel, but cannot read it as it was given forth in the Spirit then, nor as it is now again held forth in the ſame Spirit and power. O my friends! this is the truth to you (wait on the Lord, that ye may underſtand it from him): *Your right eye muſt be put out*, (which will never ceaſe offending you, and cauſing you to ſtumble, ſo long as it is able to ſee) *and all your knowledge which ye hold out of the life become as droſs and dung to you, if ever ye taſte and come to enjoy the excellency and glory of this appearance of God in his eternal Spirit, who hath deſcended from on high into the hearts of his choſen, to prepare them for his ſpiritual temple, that he may dwell in them, and they in him. And he will dwell in them, and they ſhall dwell in him, to the full delight and ſatisfaction of their hearts, and to the confuſion of all thoſe who remain deſpiſing and reproaching this his glorious appearance, and his people in whom he hath appeared.* The day is not far off, wherein this will be made manifeſt; wherein great bitterneſs and anguiſh of ſpirit will befall thoſe who can only ſee the glory afar off, but cannot inherit it, being found in that nature and ſpirit which is ſeparated from it, and eternally ſhut out of it.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME

SOME

OBSERVATIONS

UPON THAT

Portion of Scripture, ROMANS xiv. 20. for the Service of ſuch in this preſent Age, whoſe Eyes and Hearts the Lord ſhall pleaſe to open, to ſee and conſider the Weight of the Truth thereof. With ſome few weighty WORDS of ADVICE to ſeveral Sorts of People, according to their different States.

"For meat deſtroy not the work of God." Rom. xiv. 20.

OBSERVATION I.

God hath a work in ſome mens hearts.

THE mighty God, who made heaven and earth, and whoſe eyes run to and fro through both, he, by the finger of his pure power, toucheth ſome of the hearts of the children of men, and in the pure demonſtration of his living Spirit is found working there. Religion, true religion, is not a matter of opinion, (as men, who have not taſted of the power, are apt to imagine) but a *new creation and work of God* in the heart of the creature, ſowing the light and life of his Spirit there, and by it working man out of the darkneſs and death of ſin (which is the deſtruction and miſery of the ſoul) into his life and bleſſedneſs.

OBSERVATION

OBSERVATION II.

That this work of God in man is liable to be deſtroyed.

God could ſo have made man as that he could not have fallen. He could ſo have comprehended mans ſpirit in the pure power of his life, as that man could not have broke out of it. But it pleaſed him to make him under a law, wherein, waiting upon, and watching to, the power of life, he might be preſerved, and remain happy; but departing from it, he ſhould loſe his ſtate, and ſink into miſery. God could alſo ſo redeem man, as that no power ſhould ſtop or interrupt his work; but it pleaſeth him alſo to hold forth *a law of redemption*, according to which, his work of redemption may either go forward or backward. As man is drawn by the Spirit of God, and followeth his leadings out of the corruption, out of the vanity, out of the earthly nature, out of the wiſdom, reaſonings, and ſpirit of this world, ſo the work goeth forward. As man is tempted, hearkeneth unto, and is drawn back by any of theſe from the leadings of God's Spirit, ſo the work goeth backward, and degrees of deſtruction overtake and come upon the work of God in that heart.

OBSERVATION III.

A little thing will deſtroy the work of God in the heart.

A matter of meat, eating but a little meat doubtingly, out of the faith, (wherein is the preſervation from the deſtruction) this leads into the ſin, where death and deſtruction is ſtill met with. For in the path of life, in the faith, in the obedience to God's Spirit, there alone is the preſervation of the work of God; but in the unbelief, in the diſobedience, in the doubting, (though about ever ſo ſmall a matter) there is

is death and deſtruction met with, if the perſon venture upon that which he doubteth of. Thoſe who have travelled in the path of life, I know can witneſs this. Oh! how ſmall a thing brings a veil over the life! What a little giving way to the reaſonings of the earthly ſpirit about a ſmall matter drives back the work of God in the heart, and brings anguiſh and miſery upon the ſoul, cauſing the hiding the light of God's countenance. which is the life and joy of the renewed ſpirit! God is a great king, and all his leadings and teachings are weighty; and he that rebelleth, or neglecteth in the leaſt thing, muſt bear his burden, unleſs he feel the humiliation of his ſoul, and the remiſſion from the Spirit of the Lord, the grace of God pitying him, and the blood of his Son waſhing him.

OBSERVATION IV.

No man ſhould do that which tendeth to deſtroy the work of God in himſelf, or the work of God in another.

There is no ſuch thing allowable by God for any man to do (whether in publick government, or in any kind of commerce or converſation amongſt men, or in one's private courſe of walking) which tendeth to deſtroy the work of God. The intent of government, either in church or ſtate, was never to deſtroy the work of God in any man. Government is of God, both in church and ſtate. But that way of government which deſtroyeth his work in any, is not of him; but contrary to him, and againſt him. Oh! that men could conſider, and had the balance of truth to weigh things in, that they might bow before the God of truth, and not ſtrive with their Maker about his work in the world.

My ſoul hath mourned, I may ſay, almoſt from my cradle, about the eſtate of this creation. To behold

behold man fallen from his glory, departed from his God, living without the ſenſe of him, and ſowing the ſeeds of eternal miſery for his poor ſoul (which he muſt as certainly reap as he hath ſown, unleſs he travel the path of redemption in the powerful leadings and guidance of God's Holy Spirit); this hath ſo broken my heart, (together with the cloſe exerciſes which have continually attended this poor wearied ſpirit) that I have often wondered how the natural life could be contained in the natural veſſel.

I am a lover of mankind in general, and have been a deep ſufferer with, and traveller for, all the miſerable. None knows the path of my ſorrows, or the extent of my bowels, but he that made me. It is not natural or kindly to me to upbraid any man with any kind of wickedneſs, or ever ſo juſtly-deſerved miſery; but my bowels work concerning him towards the ſpring of eternal power and compaſſions, even as I would be pitied and repreſented to the Father of mercies in the like condition. Indeed I have been emptied from veſſel to veſſel, and toſſed with multitudes of ſtorms and tempeſts; yet the ſavour of my life remaineth with me to this day, and the Spirit of my God breatheth on my heart; bleſſed be his holy name for ever. And though I walk with one ſort of people, becauſe my heart ſaith (yea, the Spirit of the eternal God hath witneſſed unto me, and ſhewn me in that light which cannot deceive, and to that eye which cannot be deceived) that they are the people whom he hath choſen out of all the gatherings (throughout the earth) from the apoſtaſy, to manifeſt his power in, and his preſence among; I ſay, though I have been guided and led by the Spirit of the Lord to walk among theſe; yet am I not bounded there, either in the love, or in the unity of my heart, but I have unity with the integrity and zeal for God which is in others, of what ſort or gathering ſoever; and I have tender bowels for all, even for thoſe which hate and perſecute that which is my life, and hath the love of my heart for ever.

Oh!

Oh! how have I prayed for the loſt world! For all the ſouls of mankind how hath my ſoul bowed in unutterable breathings of ſpirit before my God, and could not be ſilenced until he quieted my ſpirit in the righteouſneſs and excellency of his will, and bid me leave it to him. And as touching this nation, and the ſeveral ſorts in it, even thoſe who ſeem moſt caſt off, and without all ſenſe; yet the precioufneſs of their ſouls have I ſpread before the Lord my God with tears.

And now I have ſomewhat to ſay, in the love of my heart, and in the ſhinings of the light of my God, to ſeveral ſorts of people, which nearly concerns them; as thoſe whoſe hearts are weighty and ſerious (and who are not drunk up in the earthlineſs of the ſenſual nature, or miſ-biaſſed by pre-aſſumed principles from the wrong ground) may eaſily perceive.

FIRST.

To ſuch as never knew what belonged to tenderneſs of conſcience towards God, but have ſpent all their days either in licentiouſneſs of ſpirit, or in a dead formality; to ſuch my ſoul ſaith;

Oh! friends, wait to feel the power of God upon your hearts (which is preſent with that which ſometimes lets you ſee the evils thereof); that they may be melted and made tender by him, fit to receive the impreſſions of his life. Why ſhould ye go down to the pit in a dream, and center in the land of miſery? Ye have immortal ſouls in theſe earthen veſſels, which muſt either be redeemed to God by the power of his life, or be ſhut up from his glorious preſence in the chambers of death. It is a dreadful thing to appear before God after death, and receive the ſentence of condemnation for the things done in the body. Oh! that the eye of your ſouls were awakened, that ye might ſee the hazard and danger ye are incurring daily; and might know the hope of eſcape ſet before mankind, by the appearance of the grace in you, and learn of the living God to fly thereto for ſuccour, that

ye

ye might be ſheltered in the evil hour, which haſteneth apace upon all fleſh.

SECONDLY.

To ſuch as formerly have been tender and ſenſible, but are now grown hard and deaf to the voice of God's Spirit in their hearts and conſciences; this is the language of my ſoul in the love and life of my God;

Oh! that ye could wait to feel the hammer and ſtroke of God upon that which is hard, that it might be broken by him; and that that which is high, and lifted up above his pure fear (where the law of his life is learned, and the ſouls of his ſaints preſerved) might be brought down and abaſed before him. Great is your danger; exceeding difficult is your recovery. Yet there is ſtrength in the arm of the Lord God to ſtrike through your deadneſs, and to quicken the immortal principle of his life in you. Why ſhould ye, who have once taſted of the goodneſs of God, become more miſerable than the reſt of the ſons of men? Why have you departed from that which once gave you a true taſte of life, and of the ſweetneſs of redemption by it, into that ſpirit which is ſealed up in the death, in the midſt of its greateſt wiſdom, and ſureſt footing? Oh! return, return to that which leadeth to the living God, that ye may travel (in the exerciſes of his Spirit) out of the wiſdom and ſpirit of this world, unto the land of the ſoul's peace and reſt.

THIRDLY.

To ſuch as are ſtill tender, and dare not but exerciſe a conſcience towards God, even in theſe ſearching and trying times;

Friends, keep your ſtanding in the life of God. What God hath begotten in you, let it depend upon him. Let him do what he will with his own in you, and let the creature be ſubject to that living principle, which God hath ſown and raiſed in your hearts; fell

not your peace with God for any eaſe or advantage in this world. Let the tenderneſs of your conſciences, which is of value with God, be precious alſo in your eyes. The times and ſeaſons are in the Father's hand, and he ſeeth good to let this day of trial come upon you. His grace is able to carry you all through. It will be for his honour, to let all the world ſee how dear your God is to you, and how able ye are (in the meekneſs and ſtrength of the Lamb's Spirit) to ſuffer for his name's ſake. Thy will, O God, be done. The cup which our Father gives us, ſhall we not drink it? The Lord preſerve you in uprightneſs of heart towards him, in meekneſs of ſpirit towards thoſe that afflict you, and in true love and good-will towards all; that his light, which hath gathered you, may ſhine over all the darkneſs which oppoſeth it; and his life, which hath quickened and preſerved you, may be famous over all the territories and dominions of death.

FOURTHLY.

To ſuch as are hard-hearted, and of a perſecuting ſpirit towards the tender-conſcienced;

Oh! that ye knew what ye did! Ye are enemies to the moſt precious thing that is to be found among the ſons of men. Ye ſtrike at what God loves and cheriſhes, and takes great pains to bring the creature to. Ye ſtrive to keep that down upon which the happineſs of mankind depends; yea, ye conſult and take much pains to remove that out of the way, which ſtands between you and the judgments of God. Oh! that your eyes were opened; for ſurely then ye could not proceed in this courſe.

Well! the Lord will open the eyes of many; and mercy towards mankind is iſſuing from his throne; and he will ſmite that through and through which maketh the earth miſerable and deſolate of his life. But oh! that man could hear in the day of his proſperity, that adverſity might not come upon him.

Wait

Wait to read theſe things in the life from which they ſprang; and then tell me whether there is not a cauſe for what I write.

POSTSCRIPT.

THERE hath been a great apoſtaſy (ſince the days of the apoſtles) from the living power, into dead forms of worſhip and devotion, where likeneſſes of truth have been ſet up, inſtead of the truth itſelf. Now the Lord is gathering his true ſeed (even Iſrael, his beloved offspring) out of all dead forms of all kinds, into his living truth, and into the true ſpiritual worſhip; and who is he that ſhall be able to ſtop him herein? Let him conſider his ſtrength, who girds himſelf to the battle againſt him: for not by might, nor by the power of man, but by the Spirit of life in his Called, Faithful, Choſen, and Innocent Lambs, will the Lord of glory carry on his work in the world.

THREE QUERIES PROPOUNDED TO THE KING, AND PARLIAMENT, IN THE Fear of the MOST HIGH, AND IN THE Tender Love of my SOUL to them.

THE PREFACE.

THE main thing conducible towards man's ſafety and happineſs, is to ſee things aright; and he that ſeeth aright, muſt ſee with a right eye. There is an eye which cannot ſee the things of God; there is an heart alſo which is inſenſible of his warnings, and ſo runs into the pit. There is alſo an eye, to which God giveth the true ſight, which foreſeeth the evil, and ſeeketh an hiding-place; and an heart which feareth its Maker, and waiteth on him for counſel, diſtruſting its own underſtanding, which it feeleth ſhallow, and apt to err. Oh! that man might feel his want of God, and receive a principle of divine life from him, and be fixed and act therein! If I ſhould pray thus particularly for every one of you, would ye be offended with me? I have written ſomewhat here in the kindlings of my love, and in the light of life which ſhineth in my heart: Oh! that the Lord would pleaſe to open a vein of the ſame life in you, and then would ye read them in the ſame, and (in a ſecret ſenſe of ſpirit) feel what they are, and from whence they come! Now if it ſhould pleaſe the Lord that any of you ſhould feel any touches of heart, and ſecret aſſent of ſoul to the truth of them, oh! take heed of the fleſhly wiſdom and reaſonings of the earthly mind, which will ſoon riſe up afterwards, to wear out the ſenſe of any good that God begets in the heart.

THREE QUERIES PROPOUNDED TO THE KING, AND PARLIAMENT.

QUERY I.

WHETHER ye do certainly and infallibly know what was the ground or cauſe why the hand of the Lord was ſo heavy upon this nation, and why he overturned the government thereof, and brought the honourable into contempt?

Three things are ſuppoſed to be taken for granted in this QUERY.

Firſt, That it was the hand of the Lord that did this. It is he that hath the anguiſh of ſoul, and the diſeaſes of body, at his command; and afflicteth both mens bodies and ſouls at his pleaſure. And he alſo afflicteth nations, with the powers and authorities thereof, when it ſeemeth good unto him. Now this is the thing which is mainly to be eyed by particular perſons, and alſo by nations, in whatever befalleth them: to wit, the hand of the Lord in things.

Secondly,

Secondly, That there was a ground and cauſe for which the Lord did it. The Lord is tender-hearted, and loveth his creature, delighting to do it good, and doth not afflict it out of any pleaſure he hath therein, but upon a kind of neceſſity, that he may bring down evil and bring up good in a nation. "He doth not "afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." It is no pleaſure to the Lord to torment his creatures; but to deſtroy the ſeeds of corruption and unrighteouſneſs, and to bring up the good ſeed which he hath ſown in the hearts of men, this is a pleaſure to him. Now as your afflictions were very great, and the alterations in this nation ſtrange; ſo there was a conſideration in the Lord's eye to countervail them, or they had never been.

Thirdly, That it is requiſite and neceſſary for you, certainly and infallibly to underſtand the ground why the Lord did this; what his meaning was; what he was offended at and intended to bring down; what he was pleaſed with, and intended to give ſcope to ſpring up and grow under this confuſion; which could not under the former ſettlement.

The reaſon why this is neceſſary for you, is this: becauſe unleſs ye certainly underſtand this thing, ye may err and miſtake in your preſent courſe, ſetting up the ſame things now, which the heart of the Lord was then againſt, and endeavouring to ſuppreſs the ſame things, which it is the will of the Lord ſhould grow up, and ſo may provoke the ſame hand againſt you again; which truly I think is not good for you to do, nor indeed can I think ſo of you, as that ye willingly would do it. Therefore pray to the Lord for the upright balance to weigh a thing of ſuch a nature in, and of ſo deep concernment to you; for if ye do run a contrary courſe to the mind of the Lord, and he be provoked againſt you, and ſtretch forth his mighty arm and overthrow you, it will then be too late for you to conſider of theſe things.

QUERY

QUERY II.

Whether, when the Lord did overturn the former powers, with the glory and beauty of this nation, and raiſe up other powers out of the duſt, (as I may ſay) even from among them of low degree; if they had then anſwered what the Lord expected and required of them in their day, whether they ſhould have been continued by him in their dominion or no, and whether ye ſhould have had this day of trial, which it hath pleaſed the Lord now to afford you?

The day of power and government which the Lord had given you formerly, was manifeſtly by his providence come to an end; and whether ever ye ſhould have a day more, was very doubtful. All your councils and ſtrength availed nothing, ſave only to make the work more difficult, if not at length almoſt impoſſible. And now the Lord was buſy in trying ſeveral ſorts of theſe, what they would do for his name. And truly this I may ſay concerning them all (though I would not reproach any) that they did not anſwer the expectation of the Lord. But this I leave to you to conſider, *Whether, if they had anſwered the expectation of the Lord, and done what his ſoul delighted in, and what in part they promiſed, whether the Lord would have continued them in authority or no?* I propoſe this, that ye may take notice upon what tickliſh terms ye then ſtood, as to your future hopes, and how eaſily your authority and greatneſs might have been for ever buried, and that which was lately uppermoſt have continued ſo, if it had ſeemed good unto the Lord; that ſo ye may be ſenſible of what the Lord hath done in relation to you, and pray that ye may walk worthy of it, making uſe of it in the fear of his name, who hath all ſtill in his hand, and can ſtill do what he pleaſeth in this nation. Indeed he can yet bring down whom he will, and he can yet ſet up whom he will; and what he will do, ye know not; but in the fear of his dreadful name, and in holding your ſtanding out of ſelf-confidence

fidence (becauſe of your preſent ſtrength) is your ſafety.

QUERY III.

If ye do not certainly know what was the cauſe of the Lord's former diſpleaſure againſt you, and of his ſo ſore afflicting you, but ſhall err in judgment, and ſet up the ſame things again, which the Lord then put forth his hand to throw down, and alſo endeavour to cruſh and ſuppreſs that, which the Lord then made way for the growth of, whether this will not endanger your overthrow from the hand of the Lord?

Sure I am, the Lord is able to overturn you as eaſily as he overturned them that were in power before you. *What is man to the Lord? What is his fleſh to the Lord's Spirit?* What great tree could ſtand before the late vehement wind (where the Lord gave it power); which was terrible and dreadful, tearing up by the very roots? which might be a figure and warning where the Lord gives eyes to read. After ye have done all ye can, even made laws as ſtrong as ye can, and put them in the ſtricteſt courſe of execution ye can, one night from the Lord may end the controverſy, and ſhew whether we pleaſe the Lord in obeying him, or ye in making laws againſt us for our fidelity and obedience to him.

And as the Lord is able to overturn you, ſo if ye miſtake your work, miſinterpreting the paſſages of his providence, and erring in heart concerning the ground of his former diſpleaſure; and ſo (through the error of judgment) ſet yourſelves in oppoſition againſt him, replanting the plants which he will not have grow, and plucking up the plants of his planting; do ye not in this caſe provoke the Lord, even to put forth the ſtrength which is in him againſt you? We are poor worms. Alas! if ye had only us to deal with, we ſhould be nothing in your hands! But if his ſtrength ſtand behind us, we ſhall prove a very burthenſome ſtone,

ſtone, and ye will hardly be able to remove us out of the place wherein God hath ſet us, and where he pleaſeth to have us diſpoſed of. And happy were it for you, if inſtead of perſecuting us, ye yourſelves were drawn to wait for the ſame begettings of God (which we have felt) out of the earthly nature, into his life and nature, and did learn of him to govern in that; then might ye be eſtabliſhed indeed, and be freed from the danger of thoſe ſhakings and overturnings which God is haſtening upon the earth.

Now becauſe ye may be apt to think, that I write theſe things for my own ſake, and the ſakes of my friends and companions in the truth of God, that we might eſcape the ſufferings and ſeverity which we are like to undergo from you; and not ſo mainly and chiefly for your ſakes, leſt ye ſhould bring the wrath of God and miſery upon your ſouls and bodies; to prevent this miſtake in you, I ſhall add what followeth. Indeed this is not the intent of my heart; for I have long expected, and do ſtill expect, this cup of outward affliction and perſecution from you, and my heart is quieted and ſatisfied therein, knowing that the Lord will bring glory to his name, and good to us out of it: but I am ſure it is not good for you to afflict us for that which the Lord requireth of us, and wherein he accepteth us; and ye will find it the bittereſt work that ever ye went about, and in the end will wiſh that the Lord had rather never given you this day of proſperity, than that he ſhould ſuffer you thus to make uſe of it. Now that ye may the more clearly ſee the temper of my ſpirit, and how my heart ſtands in this thing, I ſhall a little open unto you my faith and hope about it, in theſe enſuing particulars.

Firſt, I am aſſured in my heart and ſoul, that this deſpiſed people (called QUAKERS) is of the Lord's begetting in his own life and nature. Indeed, had I not ſeen the power of God in them, and received from the Lord an unqueſtionable teſtimony concerning them, I had never looked towards them; for they were otherwiſe very deſpiſable in my eyes. And this I cannot

not but teſtify concerning them, that I have found the life of God in my owning them; and that which God hath begotten in my heart refreſhed by the power of life in them; and none but the Lord knows the beauty and excellency of glory, which he hath hid under this mean appearance.

Secondly, The Lord hath hitherto preſerved them againſt great oppoſition, and is ſtill able to preſerve them. Every power hitherto hath made nothing of over-running them; yet they have hitherto ſtood, by the care and tender mercy of the Lord; and the ſeveral powers which have perſecuted them, have fallen one after another.

Thirdly, I have had experience myſelf of the Lord's goodneſs and preſervation of me, in my ſuffering with them for the teſtimony of his truth, who made my bonds pleaſant to me, and my noiſome priſon (enough to have deſtroyed my weakly and tender-educated nature) a place of pleaſure and delight, where I was comforted by my God night and day, and filled with prayers for his people; as alſo with love to, and prayers for, thoſe who had been the means of outwardly afflicting me and others upon the Lord's account.

Fourthly, I have no doubt in my heart that the Lord will deliver us. The ſtrength of man, the reſolution of man, is nothing in my eye, in compare with the Lord. Whom the Lord loveth he can ſave at his pleaſure. Hath he begun to break our bonds and deliver us, and ſhall we now diſtruſt him? Are we in a worſe condition than Iſrael was, when the ſea was before them, the mountains on each ſide, and the Egyptians behind purſuing them? He indeed that looketh with man's eye, can ſee no ground of hope, nor hardly a poſſibility of deliverance; but (to the eye of faith) it is now nearer than when God began at firſt to deliver.

Fifthly, It is the delight of the Lord, and his glory, to deliver his people, when to the eye of ſenſe it ſeemeth impoſſible. Then doth the Lord delight to ſtretch forth his arm, when none elſe can help; and then

then doth it pleaſe him to deal with the enemies of his truth and people, when they are lifted up above the fear of him, and are ready to ſay in their hearts concerning them; *They are now in our hands; who can deliver them?*

Well: were it not in love to you, and in pity (in relation to what will certainly befall you, if you go on in this courſe) I could ſay in the joy of my heart, and in the ſenſe of the good-will of my God to us, who ſuffereth theſe things to come to paſs, *Go on; try it out with the Spirit of the Lord; come forth with your laws, and priſons, and ſpoiling of our goods, and baniſhment, and death,* (if the Lord pleaſe) *and ſee if ye can carry it.* For we come not forth againſt you in our own wills, or in any enmity againſt your perſons or government, or in any ſtubbornneſs or refractorineſs of ſpirit; but with the Lamb-like nature which the Lord our God hath begotten in us, which is taught and enabled by him both to do his will, and to ſuffer for his name's ſake. And if we cannot thus overcome you, (even in patience of ſpirit, and in love to you) and if the Lord our God pleaſe not to appear for us, we are content to be overcome by you. So the will of the Lord be done, ſaith my ſoul.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

OH! dear friends, hearken to the voice of the love of my heart, which ſpeaketh thus unto you! Oh! wait, wait to feel ſomewhat of God, ſomewhat of his divine life and power ſtirring in your hearts, and travel (in the light and leadings of it) out of the earthly nature, leaving the corruption of man behind, which makes you miſerable, and putting on the holineſs and righteouſneſs of the nature of God day by day, which will make you happy, as ye are made partakers of it; yea, do but come into the power of that religion which ye yourſelves profeſs, not ſo much minding the outward form, (for it is not of ſo much value) and ye ſhall find that we ſhall agree in religion ſooner than ye are aware. Now if in your hearts ye ſhall aſk me, What it is to come into the power of that religion which ye yourſelves profeſs? I ſhall appeal unto your own ſouls whether it be not this; even to forſake the devil and all his works, taking up the croſs unto your own hearts luſt and corrupt ways, and under this croſs (wherein is the power of God felt by them that mind it, and wait upon God there with humble and ſubject ſpirits) to fight the battles of Chriſt againſt temptations to ſin, and the ſoul's enemies, even until death. Here (if ye will enter at this narrow gate, and walk on in this ſtrait way unto the kingdom, into which fleſh and blood cannot enter, but the ſelfiſh nature and earthly ſpirit muſt be left behind) in this religion, which is indeed the ſubſtance of all true religion, we can readily meet and unite with you. But if ye will ſet up a form to ſtop the power and progreſs of the Spirit of the Lord in the hearts of his people

in

in this nation, and not mind the power of religion yourſelves, but with vehemency go about to force others to your form, (which ye cannot truly ſay is of God, but of man) in this we cannot cloſe with you, but muſt be content in the will of God to ſuffer under you, the time which the Lord hath allotted, which ye cannot go beyond. And bleſſed for ever be the name of the Lord, our God, who hath made us acquainted with that life and power which was before all forms and ways of religion and worſhip of man's inventing, and which will be after them; and who hath hitherto borne up our ſpirits in the teſtimony which he hath given us to bear to his living truth and worſhip, and who we doubt not will yet bear us up, even to a conqueſt in his Spirit over all that he hath called us forth to teſtify againſt. And that great city, or building of religion, which is built up by man's wiſdom, and maintained by man's ſtrength, we are ſure is falling, and ſhall fall throughout all the earth; yea, man's ſtriving to re-edify and re-eſtabliſh it, will but make the ruins thereof more ſpeedy and more dreadful. The mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it, both in the ſcriptures of truth, which cannot be broken, and in the hearts of many of his ſervants, in this day of his appearance in Spirit to thoſe, the eyes of whoſe ſpirits he hath opened, and by whom he hath given a viſit and warning to the earth, which the earthly ear cannot hear, but will be overtaken and ſurprized with the day of the Lord. And oh! what running and ſeeking will there be to the rocks, and hills, and mountains, for an hiding-place from the wrath of the Lamb! but none will be then found. O miſerable earthly-ſpirited man! (who haſt paſſed away thy time in a dream, and haſt little minded or regarded the ſalvation of thy ſoul, or conſidered what thy preſent vain pleaſures and courſes would tend to) what wilt thou then do? There is a pit prepared for the wicked (I ſpeak not an imagination of mine own; indeed it is the truth of God).

Now

Now the Lord ſeeks the ſouls of all loſt men, to ſave them from the pit; but their ears are dull of hearing, their eyes veiled, their hearts groſsly fatted and made inſenſible with the ſenſes and delights of the earthly nature, and the voice of God (with the things that concern their eternal peace, yea, their preſent welfare alſo) cannot enter into them; and ſo they let ſlip the time of their redemption, and waſte away the ſeaſon of their viſitation, hardly ever ſo much as thinking what will become of them in the end. O Lord, my God, awaken thy poor creatures, that they may live, and not die: rather let thy judgments break forth to awaken them, than that they ſhould thus run on towards utter deſtruction, even to periſh from thy life and bleſſedneſs, and to be ſwallowed up in the miſery, torment, and wrath due to that nature which they have contracted, and wallowed like ſwine in. Every nature, principle, and ſpirit is travelling towards its end. O man! take heed what nature thou art of, in what principle and ſpirit thou acteſt, and towards what thou travelleſt. And remember that God loveth his creature; thy deſtruction is not of him, if thou periſh; but in him is thy help, if thou hearken to his voice, and turn at the reproofs of that which he hath placed near thee, even in thy heart, to reprove ſin in thee, and to beget thee into the love and holineſs of his life and nature, leavening thee into a new man, as thou becomeſt ſubject to the checks and leadings thereof. This is pleaſing to the Lord; that which proceeds from this, and is performed in this, is the true worſhip, and not that which man hath invented, and with which the earthly nature is quieted and ſatisfied, but the power of life turns from.

It is the great mercy of the Lord to ſtop any man in the way of his error, and happy is he that is ſtopped by him.

Another POSTSCRIPT.

YET one thing, perhaps as my laſt unto you, let me freely propoſe; and be not haſty in ſpirit, but wait on God for ſkill and ability to weigh the thing aright, and to give an upright anſwer thereto, as before him, in the ſecrets of your conſciences. It is briefly this: Why may not the power of religion be permitted to flouriſh under you? Cannot the government of God's Spirit and your government ſtand together? I beſeech you conſider it. No man knoweth how ſhort his time is, nor what is to come after his preſent determination of things. It is now your day: Oh! that ye had the true light to walk by in it, that ye might not afterwards repent; and that my heart might be gladded concerning you, who have ſo prayed for you, as if I had felt mine own ſoul in your conditions.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

A SALUTATION OF LOVE and tender GOOD-WILL TO THE COMMISSIONERS of the PEACE FOR THE COUNTY of BUCKS,

And ſuch others in that COUNTY, and alſo throughout the NATION, as are concerned in the Contents hereof.

IF I ſhould warn you of the day of the Lord (which is a day of terrible wrath to the tranſgreſſing nature, but of peace, love, and tender mercy to the righteous, innocent, ſuffering ſeed); if I ſhould tell you that this day is haſtening upon this nation, and upon the whole earth; and if this ſhould affright you, and cauſe you to cry unto the Lord to deliver you from that nature, and from thoſe ſinful courſes, which make you but a fit fewel for his fire in the day of its hot burning; I ſay, if by this means ye ſhould be thus prepared for this day, and yet this day comes not ſo ſuddenly as ye might expect; yet that would be no loſs, or cauſe of grief unto you. But if this day

ſhould ſuddenly come, and find you in your ſins, and ſo the fierce wrath of the Lord break in upon and afflict your ſouls, and the day of your mercy and redemption be wholly paſſed over by you; this would be matter of unutterable grief and ſorrow to you, and the remembrance of your former eaſe and pleaſures would but increaſe the ſenſe and anguiſh of your miſery.

Certain I am, there is a day of giving account for ſinning againſt God, and for oppreſſing that in your conſciences which diſcovers to you, and checks you for, your ſins. And this will as certainly come, as the day of ſinning now is; and then every man muſt receive from God according to his works, and reap the fruit of the deeds done in the body; then every ſoul muſt inherit according to its nature, and every veſſel be filled with what it is fitted to receive. That which is fitted for mercy, with mercy; that which is fitted for wrath and miſery, with wrath and miſery; and when the diſtreſſed ſinner will wiſh, *Oh! that I had an hour to eſcape! Oh! that God would once more give me a moment of repentance, and of turning from ſin!*

Oh! conſider; is it a ſlight thing with you that the infinite God, who is little concerned in you, (being perfectly bleſſed and happy for ever without you; but as his love, mercy, and tender nature, maketh him concern himſelf about the ſalvation of your ſouls) ſhould give you ſo large a ſpace of repentance, and ſo many diſcoveries of the evil of your ways, (when at any time ye are retired and ſerious) and ſo many checks and warnings in your hearts, as the vileſt of ſinners, at times, have more or leſs from God? Can ye lengthen out the day of mercy? Can ye limit God how long he ſhould ſtrive with you? Oh! why do you harden your hearts? Why do you hearken to the luſts, deſires, temptations, and counſels of the earthly mind, whoſe counſel hath undone all that have liſtened thereunto?

There

There is no way of avoiding the eternal infupportable wrath of God, but by travelling out of that nature, fpirit, and courfe which it is to. Him that fowed to fin and corruption under the law, the facrifices would not fave then; nor him that foweth to fin and corruption under the gofpel, the facrifice of Chrift will not fave now; but he that is faved by Chrift muft be fanctified and redeemed from fin and corruption by him; which Chrift worketh by his principle of life fown in the heart; which principle turneth againft the contrary principle, difcovering its nature, and evil dark ways, and drawing from, and leading out of them. Oh! therefore let me in love intreat you all, my dear countrymen, (indeed I have no end in it but your good) to mind that in your hearts which difcovers your evils to you; that therein ye may feel the power of life drawing you from them, and helping you againft them. Greater is the power in this than the power that is in the contrary principle; as thofe that hearken to it, and become fubject, by experience feel. And what if ye lofe a few fond pleafures for the prefent, (which indeed are beneath the true ftate of a man) ye will lofe a great deal of mifery too, and your gain at laft will be exceeding great.

If ye would know whether I fpeak truth in thefe things, come to the true balance, and wait on the Lord, till by him ye be made able to weigh. My meaning is, join to the good Spirit of the Lord, when ye find it ftirring in your own hearts; give up unto it, let in its ftrength upon you, in its warmth and drawing virtue; give up to forfake the evil, and purfue the good: fear not the multitude of evils in the heart, nor the long accuftomednefs unto evil; the Lord will help the willing foul out of them. And in this obedience to the good Spirit of the Lord, there will be an underftanding received to know the things of God, and to try words and fayings, whether they be of him, or of man. And he that tries in this balance cannot be deceived (the meafure being equal and juft, and

proper to the things which are therewith to be meaſured); whereas the wiſeſt of men, truſting either to their own underſtandings and judgments, or to the judgments and underſtandings of others, are liable to be deceived; and then ye will acknowledge what love this ſprang from, and what light and life it ſprang up in, though through a weak and contemptible veſſel.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

CONCERNING

PEACE and GOOD-WILL.

THE true peace is in the new nature, which puts an end to the warring and fighting ſpirit inwardly, and turns the whole ſtrength of the battle againſt the enemies of the ſoul. In the old nature there are luſts after dominion, and after liberty to the fleſh, and fulfilling the ſelf-will of the earthly mind: but theſe are all brought down in the renewed ſpirit, by the power, love, and ſweetneſs of the goſpel of peace. Here is indeed uprightneſs of heart to the Lord, quietneſs of ſpirit under whatever the Lord ſuffers to be, and good-will towards all men; waiting on the Lord for his ſeaſons of tender bowels, with ſtrong cries and tears, even for thoſe, who, to the eye of man, may ſeem ſo hardened againſt God and his truth, as to be out of the reach of mercy.

A WEIGHTY

A

WEIGHTY QUESTION

PROPOUNDED TO THE

KING,

AND

Both Houses of Parliament.

TOGETHER WITH SOME

QUERIES

ABOUT

RELIGION,

FOR THE

GOOD of MEN's SOULS,

That they may ſeek after, and be eſtabliſhed in, that which gives Life.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

A WEIGHTY QUESTION

PROPOUNDED TO THE

KING,

AND

Both Houſes of PARLIAMENT.

QUESTION.

Whether laws made by man, in equity, ought to extend any further than there is power in man to obey.

IS it not cruel to require obedience in ſuch caſes, wherein the party hath not a capacity in him of obeying? Now in things concerning the worſhip of God, wherein a man is limited by God, both what worſhip he ſhall perform, and what worſhip he ſhall abſtain from, here he is not left at liberty to obey what laws ſhall be made by man contrary hereunto.

The New-Teſtament-worſhip is to be in Spirit and Truth; which is a principle above man's reaſon, and cannot rightly be limited by a lower principle; but the lower principle in every man ſhould be ſubjected to the higher, both in himſelf and others.

Theſe things I write, not in pride or conceitedneſs, but with an humble heart, and in love; that God may have his due, Cæſar his, and all men theirs; and that wrath from God may not break forth upon this nation: for ſurely it cannot but greatly provoke him, to ſee his people ſo deeply ſuffer for their obedience to him, in what he requireth of them.

I am

I am a lover of peace, truth, and righteouſneſs, and an hearty deſirer of the welfare and proſperity of this nation; and that it may no more be broken up in the wrath and indignation of the Lord; but that the peaceable and righteous ſeed, which he hath ſown in the hearts of many, may be quietly ſuffered to grow up, to the praiſe of the Lord, and to the good of mankind.

This is from one, who was a mourner over you in your affliction, and is now alſo a mourner over thoſe whom ye afflict.

I. P.

SOME

QUERIES about RELIGION.

Query 1. *WHAT is true religion?* Is it a gift from God, beſtowed on thoſe whom he begets by the power of his life? Or is it a profeſſion of worſhip of the nature of this world, which a man by natural parts and induſtry may attain to, as well as to other things?

Query 2. What is the *ſum and ſubſtance of the true religion?* Is it not love from a principle of life? Is it not a travel out of the enmity of the creature into the love of God? Doth not the light of life ſpring in the love, and gather into the love? Doth not Chriſt, revealed in the heart, and leavening the heart with the ſavour of life, teach love to enemies, to bear with them in love, to ſeek them in love, to forgive them in love, to pray for them in love, to wiſh good to them, and wreſtle with God for mercy towards them, even while they are hating and perſecuting?

Query 3. Are the Papiſts, or Proteſtants, or any other ſort of religious perſons, found in this love?

Do

Do they manifeſt it by their diſcipleſhip to Chriſt, and the power of Chriſt in them? Or rather, do they not ſet up their ſeveral forms, and maintain them in wrath and enmity againſt each other? Nay, would they not deſtroy each other, if they could? Surely this ſpirit is in too many of them! And doth not this give a ſtrong evidence againſt their religion, that it hath but a form, and not the true power in it, and that in heart they are not the diſciples of Chriſt? For if they were ſuch, they would of him learn the love.

Query 4. Whether any form of religion (if not held in the power, and ſubjected to the power) doth not fight againſt the power, keeping up an outſide ſhew without the ſubſtance, and thereby cruſhing the ſubſtance? What form of religion at this day in the world can ſuffer the love to grow, and the life to lead and rule in the love, and the Lord of life to exerciſe his authority in the hearts and conſciences of men? And this is for want of power within, and becauſe of forms forcibly ſet up without: for the religion of the goſpel began in Spirit and in power, and it never can be reſtored and preſerved but by the ſame Spirit and power. The renting of the Proteſtants from the Papiſts was no farther good than it was in the power of the life; and the renting of others from the Proteſtants was no farther good, than it was begun and held in the ſame power: nay, any party, though beginning ever ſo uprightly, and by ever ſo true and clear a leading of the Spirit of God; yet ſo ſoon as it begins to invent and turn aſide to a form of its own chooſing, and is upheld by the reaſonings and underſtandings of men, it preſently corrupts.

Query 5. Whether the power of religion (and the true love) if it were raiſed up and reſtored again, would make the world happy, and ſet every thing in its proper place, both inwardly and outwardly? Is not ſenſe an excellent thing in man, if it be guided by reaſon? And is not reaſon a much more excellent thing, if it be guided by an inward principle of life? But ſenſe left to itſelf, without the guidance of reaſon,

ſon, how brutiſh is it! And reaſon left to itſelf, without the guidance of a principle of life, falls below ſenſe. How cruel, how blind, how ſelfiſh, how unrighteous is man, that follows the dictates of his own corrupt reaſon, without knowing and becoming ſubject to that, which ſhould enlighten it, and give him the right uſe thereof!

Query 6. Whether God will reſtore religion again in the power? Whether he hath ſuch a work to do in the world? And whether the time be near that God is about ſuch a work? And whether he hath already begun it, and made any progreſs in it? Is there ſuch a thing as the power of religion ſought after? Do men grow weary of their forms of worſhip, and find them empty, and unſatisfactory to the hungry ſoul, that pants after life? Nay, have there not been ſome touches and appearances of life and power, and of the true love, in ſome poor, weak, deſpiſed ones? Oh! that men knew the times and ſeaſons, and then perhaps they would ſee that this is not a day for ſetting up of forms, but of longing and crying out after life and power!

Query 7. When God reſtoreth religion, and raiſeth it up in power, whether then forms and ways of worſhip, without the power, muſt not needs wither and decay? When the power firſt appeared in the diſpenſation of the goſpel, did not all the ſhadows of Moſes's ceremonies fly away, and vaniſh before it? And when it appears again, ſhall not all the ſhadows and inventions of man, which have ſprung up ſince in the time of the night, vaniſh before the brightneſs of the light of the day? Where the power ariſeth in any heart, what becomes of the man, with all that ſprings from him? Where is his wiſdom? Where is his former worſhip? What becomes of all his forms of religion? Do they not all moulder and come to nothing, and he become as a little child, to be formed again in the power of life, and born of the Spirit of life, that he may enter into God's kingdom? Do not all the old things paſs away, and new things ſpring up from the

ſeed

ſeed of life, which God ſows and preſerves in the hearts of his by his power?

Now who is wiſe to underſtand theſe things? Who hath the key to open the myſteries of life? Who knoweth the times and the ſeaſons (the times and ſeaſons of forms, and the times and ſeaſons of life and power)? Who ſeeth what God is about to do in the world, and prepareth his heart for his adminiſtrations on the earth? Who is a friend to God, and to mankind, and willing to travel in ſpirit out of this dark, corrupt, earthly ſtate of things, into the heavenly nature and being, where man was at firſt, from whence he came, out of which he departed, and can never be happy till he return thither again; and can never return thither by his own ſtrength and reaſon, but only by the power and leadings of God, revealed in him, an inward principle of life? And he that will follow this muſt feel it in his heart, and then turn his back upon the earthly nature and wiſdom, and war againſt his own corrupt reaſonings, in and with the light of the principle of life, as it ariſeth, and is further and further made manifeſt in his heart, through the grace and mercy of God, which thereby offereth its help to miſerable loſt man, to redeem him out of his miſery and undone eſtate.

Man hath a time here allotted him by God; and when the time is over, it is determined concerning him. He is a ſeeds-man in this world, and what he ſows here he muſt reap hereafter. He ſoweth either to the fleſh, or to the Spirit; either to his own will, or to God's will. He followeth either the ways of his own heart, or of God's Spirit. He either feels the power of religion, and is renewed thereby, and fitted for God, or contents himſelf with a form without the power, and in effect remains what he was.

He that is renewed, he that is changed in heart and life, he that ſoweth to the will and nature of God, ſhall inherit life with God. He that liveth in a form of religion without the power, and followeth the vanities of his own mind, (going out of this world unrenewed

renewed and unfitted for God) ſhall be cut off from God, and lie down in ſorrow and anguiſh of ſoul, where he will bitterly bewail his miſ-ſpent time, and the loſing of his ſoul's life and happineſs, for the enjoying a few days, the earthly nature and ſpirit in its corrupt and degenerated eſtate.

O man! whoever thou art, that art drowned in the luſts and pleaſures of this world, which anſwer only to the ſenſual and corrupt part! Oh! remember that thou haſt alſo a precious ſoul, which wants redemption by the power of God to make thee happy. And one day this ſoul will be awakened in thee, and when it is awakened, it will feel its want of God. This is the day of God's ſtretching out his arm to thee; oh! ſlip it not out! for if thou doſt, terrible will the day of thy awaking be; and thy miſery unavoidable and intolerable. And if now the pains of thy body be ſo dreadful to thee, what will the tearings of thy ſoul be by the wrath of the Almighty? Lay it to heart, and retire inwardly, ſeeking to feel ſomewhat of God gathering and guiding thy ſoul out of thine own worldly nature and ſpirit, into the nature and life of his Spirit; that thy ſoul (at preſent ſeparated from God, and drowned in the earth) may return to, and be happy in, the center of life, from whence it came. For there is a center of ſouls, as well as of the earthly nature; and *the ſpirit of man returneth to God that gave it*, as well as the body to the earth. And then the Lord appointeth it to its proper place, which is according to the nature it is found in. If it be *wheat*, if it be of the *renewed nature*, if it hath *taken up the croſs, and followed Chriſt in the regeneration*, then he gathereth it into his *garner*. If it be of the *chaffy nature*, of the *earthly ſpirit*; the mind remaining unrenewed and unreconciled to the nature of God; then *to the unquenchable fire*, (even the fire which will burn and ſcorch unquenchably) *and to the worm which dieth not*; but gnaweth perpetually, and bringeth to mind all the former vanity and miſ-ſpent time, to increaſe the heat and flames of the fire. Oh! where is the ſoul,

ſoul, that, if it were not wholly bewitched and lulled into a dead ſleep, by the ſtupefying ſpirit of this world, would run ſo great a hazard, for the enjoying of a few momentary pleaſures in the ſenſual part, and loſe thereby the inward enjoyment of peace and reconciliation with God here, and of the pleaſures of his kingdom of true glory afterwards.

Now for a cloſe, let me ſay one word (in the upright love, and true good-will of my heart) to this preſent generation, that they may conſider and take heed (if poſſibly); it is this.

Even as a father after the fleſh is tender to the children he begets according to his nature, and would not ſuffer them to be wronged or deſtroyed, if he could help it; ſo is the Lord tender of thoſe whom he begets in the nature of his life, and in his due ſeaſon will appear for them, as ſurely as he is God, and as ſurely as he has begotten them out of the worldly nature unto himſelf, by the Spirit and power of his life. Therefore, Oh! touch not any whom the Lord hath in the leaſt meaſure anointed with his holy oil! For what is done unto the leaſt of theſe *poor, naked, ſick, impriſoned ones*, &c. he looketh upon as done unto himſelf; becauſe he is one with them in the ſufferings of their fleſh, whom he hath made one with himſelf in Spirit.

CONCERN-

CONCERNING

The Perſuaſions of REASON and FAITH in Matters of RELIGION.

THERE is the natural man, and the ſpiritual man; and there are the perſuaſions of each in and about matters of religion. There is the perſuaſion of reaſon, and the perſuaſion of faith.

The perſuaſion of reaſon is that belief which man receives into his mind or heart from the exerciſe of the reaſoning faculty; and this perſuaſion in matters of religion is but man's opinion or judgment; which, how certain or infallible ſoever it appear to him, yet may be ſhaken by a demonſtration or evidence of an higher kind and nature.

The perſuaſion of faith is that belief which the new creature receives in the renewed mind, from the evidence and demonſtration of the Spirit, which openeth and manifeſteth the things of the Spirit, unto that mind which is begotten and renewed by it. And this perſuaſion is certain and infallible, however it may be ſtruck at and battered, by the reaſonings of the wiſe earthly part, even in that very man whoſe heart is thus perſuaded, by the light of the Spirit of God, concerning the things of God's kingdom.

Now the loweſt perſuaſion of faith is higher, and of a more noble nature, than the higheſt perſuaſion of reaſon; becauſe faith is of an higher principle, and of a deeper nature and ground, than man's reaſon is. But this, becauſe it appears not in man's ſphere, but rather out of it, and is contrary to the line and reach of his wiſdom, is accounted by him *fooliſhneſs and madneſs*. Thus is the wiſdom of God

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(and the children thereof) judged and condemned by man in this day.

And how can it be otherwiſe? How can the wiſdom of man but judge that as fooliſhneſs, whoſe beauty and excellency is hid from its eye? But this is becauſe the wiſdom of man is out of its place, not ſubjected to the wiſdom of God, but exalted above it; therefore (as a curſe unto it) is it ſuffered to lift up itſelf in its conceitedneſs againſt, and ſo to perſecute, the pure wiſdom of God and the births thereof, that it might fall, and be broken, and ſnared, and taken, and its day deſervedly come to an end, and be ſhut up in the ſhadows and chambers of eternal darkneſs.

But what ear of man can hear this! ſurely none that is whole in the line of man's wiſdom, reaſon, and underſtanding; but that alone that is bruiſed, broken, and in ſome meaſure daſhed in pieces, by the inroads of a diviner life and nature. This, in the leadings of that life which hath broken it, and in the ſhinings of the light eternal upon it and into it, may be enabled to take up the croſs to the natural part, and to die that death with Chriſt, which preſerves from the ſecond death, with the miſery thereof.

Happy is he, who knows and hearkens to the perſuaſions of God's Spirit, who is born of God, and taught to wait upon him and worſhip him in Spirit, who receives his religion from the light of faith, into the renewed nature and mind, and not from the reaſon of man into the natural underſtanding, which is eaſily corrupted, and cannot be kept pure, but alone by the indwelling of the principle of eternal life in it.

For though ſuch may ſuffer very deeply in this world, from the men of this world, (as the ſubjects and ſervants to the principle of life have done in all ages and generations) yet their principle will bear them out; in which God will appear to ſtrengthen and refreſh their ſpirits, and carry them up above all their ſufferings, in the patience, meekneſs, and faith of the Lamb. And keeping to their principle they can-

not be overcome, but muſt either live or die conquerors, according to the will and good pleaſure of him who ordereth and diſpoſeth of all things well, and bringeth good out of every evil, in deſpight of all the powers of darkneſs. And he that overcometh (whether by life or death) in the Lamb's Spirit, ſhall wear the Lamb's crown, and ſit down in that perfect reſt in the kingdom of the Father, which will give the hearts of all his children full ſatisfaction. In which aſſured hope (life ſtirring in our boſoms, and quickening our hearts with love unto God, and zeal for his truth) we can freely give up all that is near and dear unto us in this world, and lay down our heads in inward peace, in the midſt of the greateſt outward perſecution and trouble. *Even ſo, O Lord, thy will be done concerning this generation of thy people, whom thou haſt begotten to thyſelf, and brought forth by thy mighty power, to teſtify to thy truth in this preſent day. Diſpoſe of them as it pleaſeth thee; and let not their faith in thee, nor thy faithfulneſs to them, fail; but let them be a praiſe to thy name throughout all generations; and tendered by thee, as the firſt-fruits of thine appearance, in the glorious light of the everlaſting day, after this great, long, thick, and dark night of apoſtaſy from the life and ſpirit of the apoſtles, which hath ſo long eclipſed and covered the brightneſs of thy beauty from the ſight of the earth.*

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME

SOME OF THE

MYSTERIES

OF

GOD's KINGDOM

GLANCED AT.

For the Service of the Upright-Hearted among ſeveral Sorts of Profeſſors,

Who have formerly had a Feeling of moſt of theſe Things in Meaſure:

To which Feeling, and that which gave it them, they are hereby allured and invited to return;

That the MANY NAMES and VARIOUS WAYS may periſh and vaniſh; and the ONE SPIRIT, ONE LIFE, ONE New living NAME and WAY may be waited for and purſued after:

That ſo all the TRIBES and FAMILIES, and ſeveral Diviſions of ISRAEL, may know one another,

And heartily unite in ONE NATURE and INWARD POWER of LIFE, which doth Good to ALL, and Harm to NONE, neither inwardly nor outwardly.

BY

A Traveller towards the living Subſtance, and a Mourner over the Wanderings of the ſcattered Sheep.

ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

THE PREFACE.

NONE but Chriſt, none but Chriſt, ſaith my ſoul, from the ſenſe of my continual need of him, and from the deep love of my heart unto him. Now there is a twofold way of knowing Chriſt, both which are of uſe, and have their ſervice in their ſeveral ſeaſons, according to the eſtate and condition of the ſoul, and according to the diſpenſation which it pleaſeth God to ſet up among his people; the one whereof is literal, the other ſpiritual; the one is according to a deſcription of him received into the underſtanding; the other is according to the revelation or unveiling of him in the heart. As for inſtance, Chriſt may be preached as light, as life, as power; as the eternal word and wiſdom of the Father, &c. Now the receiving the knowledge of theſe things merely into the underſtanding, is a receiving and knowing Chriſt according to the letter, or according to a literal deſcription of him; and the receiving of any of theſe things in the living ſenſe and ſhinings of the eternal light of God in the heart, and ſo becoming ſubject in that life, ſenſe, and power, is a knowing and receiving of them in ſpirit, and the ſpiritual ſubmiſſion and obedience of the goſpel. This is the excellent way and path of life which God in this laſt age of the world is making manifeſt; though the other is not quite laid aſide, nor to be rejected or deſpiſed, where there

is any of the light of life ſtirring in it. But the main thing now to be minded is the heavenly birth, with God's diſpenſation of life to it, and its ſeparation from the earthly birth, and its way of feeding on the heavenly things. For Hagar and Iſhmael (which are the mother and child after the letter) are now to be caſt out; and the ſeed of promiſe, with its mother, to abide in the houſe alone (with the Father of bleſſings) for ever. So that now the ſeparation goeth very near and cloſe. The birth that is now raiſed is very inward and ſpiritual, even the ſeed itſelf; and its food is the life itſelf, even that which the earthly birth cannot feed on or digeſt; and the way and knowledge of life is very inward and ſpiritual, to cut off the earthly nature and ſpirit in its cloſeſt inſinuations and transformings. The Lamb, in his appearances in this day, is very hidden and retired; and none can ſee his paths, and follow him, but ſuch as receive of his preſent ointment, and feel the guidance of the opening of his eye in them. The Lord is bringing about great things, both inwardly and outwardly; happy are they whoſe hearts and ſpirits are prepared for them: for great miſery, death, and deſtruction is coming upon the earthly, and great joy and bleſſedneſs is breaking up in, and ſhowering down upon, the heavenly; which that all ſouls that have the breath of life in them, and that pant after the living God, may partake of, is the earneſt deſire of my ſoul.

SOME

SOME OF THE

MYSTERIES

OF

GOD'S KINGDOM

GLANCED AT.

Concerning CHRIST.

Queſt. *WHAT is Chriſt?*

Anſ. He is the immediate offspring of eternal life in himſelf, and the fountain or ſpring of life unto the creation. "Even as the Father hath life "in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have life "in himſelf:" and in and through his Son he communicateth of his life unto his creatures.

Queſt. 2. *How doth Chriſt convey life?*

Anſ. As the living Word; as the promiſed ſeed. He ſoweth the ſeed of the kingdom in the heart, in which is life: and as he maketh way for this to ſpread and grow up in and leaven the veſſel, even ſo he quickeneth and gathereth into his life. Again, he is the enlightening word, the quickening word, the word of wiſdom, the word of power, the word of love and reconciliation, whoſe voice worketh mightily towards the deſtroying of ſin, and ſaving of the ſoul from it.

Queſt. 3. *Where is this Word or ſeed to be waited for?*

Anſ. Its appearance is in the hearts of the ſons of men, and there it is to be waited for. There God ſows this ſeed; and there it is nigh to them whom God viſits with his loving-kindneſs and mercy.

Queſt. 4. *How is this Word received?*

Anſ. By faith in the virtue which floweth from it. Its nature is to turn againſt ſin, and to draw towards the Father. Its light ſhineth to diſcover ſin, and its life ſtirreth to quicken againſt it. Now in the heart's believing, and being perſuaded againſt that which the light diſcovereth to be evil, and won to that which it ſheweth to be good, the word is thus far received, and a foundation of union between it and the ſoul laid. And ſo, on the other hand, in the rejecting or turning from any thing that comes from Chriſt in the heart, Chriſt is rejected and turned from.

Queſt. 5. *How doth this Word work in or upon the heart?*

Anſ. According to the entrance it gets into the heart, or according as it is rejected or refuſed. As it gets entrance, it works life there, and works the creature into its life. It brings in its nature, its righteouſneſs, its holineſs, its ſweetneſs, its peace, its love, its joy, its meekneſs, its patience, &c. as it makes room in the heart, by working out the contrary. But where it is rejected, it works death and condemnation, and increaſeth the captivity and miſery of the ſoul; ſo that it were better never to hear any ſound of Chriſt in the heart, than not to hearken and become ſubject thereto.

Queſt. 6. *What hinders union with Chriſt?*

Anſ. The ſtrong man armed, whom he cometh to diſpoſſeſs; who doth what he can to blind the eye from ſeeing the lovely nature of Chriſt, and to harden the heart againſt his viſits and appearances.

Queſt. 7. *How may the ſoul be helped againſt him?*

Anſ. Receiving the truth in the love, and giving up the heart in the virtue that flows from Chriſt in his viſits and appearances, brings in that ſtrength into the

ſoul

ſoul which conquers him. He is not able to ſtand before the power of Chriſt; which power is the ſoul's, as it is let in by the ſoul. It is the unbelief of the heart, and the earthly thoughts and imaginations, which give the enemy ſtrength: but before the faith (even in the weakeſt) he is weak, and his ſtrength falls.

Concerning the WAY of knowing CHRIST.

CHRIST is the miniſter of the true ſanctuary, which God hath pitched, and not man. There is a city, "whoſe builder and maker is God." The foundation-ſtone, the corner-ſtone, the top-ſtone of this city or building, is Chriſt. He therefore that would know Chriſt, and be built upon Chriſt, muſt find an holy thing revealed in his heart, and his ſoul built thereon by him, who alone can raiſe this building, who can rear up the tabernacle that hath long been fallen down, who can build up the old waſte places, and reſtore the paths for the ranſomed and redeemed of the Lord to walk and travel on in.

Now he which can find any thing of God built up in his heart, (yea, if he can find but the beginning of the true ſanctuary) he may alſo find Chriſt miniſtering there; even the true high-prieſt offering up the ſacrifices, and interceding with the Father; as alſo giving the ſoul the food of the holy things to eat of. Now this is the way of Chriſt indeed; to wit, in his begettings in the heart, in his preſence there, in his miniſtrations there, between the ſoul and the Father. And he that thus knoweth him, even in that which is begotten of him, watching in ſingleneſs of heart with the true eye, cannot be deceived concerning him, but knoweth the voice of his Spirit, and readily embraceth it; but a ſtranger or deceiver it knoweth not, nor will not hear, but by the inſtinct of life turneth from it. So that the knowledge and preſervation of the ſheep is not by the wiſe reaſonings of the mind concerning

cerning the ſhepherd's voice and the ſtranger's voice; but by an inſtinct of the new hidden nature, which teacheth the ſimple-hearted to avoid the ſnares which the earthly wiſdom is eaſily entangled in. The meek, the humble, the broken-hearted, the weak, the poor, the babes, the little children, theſe are they whom the Father teacheth; theſe have that preſervation and inſtruction, which the wiſe, knowing, judicious minds (in man's account) miſs of. Thus *the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than man, and the weakneſs of God ſtronger than man.* And God hath choſen in every man *that which is not,* to bring to nought *all that is* in him, that no fleſh might glory in his preſence, nor no man be able to boaſt before the Lord of the ſalvation of his ſoul.

Concerning REPENTANCE.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is repentance?*

Anſ. It is Chriſt's turning of the heart from the dead nature, and from the dead works, towards the living principle, and the living works thereof.

Queſt. 2. *Cannot a man turn from ſin, and turn to God when he will?*

Anſ. No; man is a captive, his underſtanding captive, his will captive; all his affections and nature in captivity; and nothing can turn him towards God, but that which is ſtronger than that power which captivateth him.

Queſt. 3. *How is repentance wrought?*

Anſ. It is Chriſt's gift, whom God hath appointed a prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins, who giveth it in his enlightening and drawing virtue, wherein ſin's nature is opened, and the bent of the ſoul by him ſecretly turned againſt it.

Queſt. 4. *What is the heart turned from, and what is it turned towards?*

Anſ.

Anſ. From one nature to another, from one principle to another, from one ſpirit to another, from one courſe to another, from one end to another.

Queſt. 5. *Is repentance wholly given, or perfected at firſt?*

Anſ. No; but it increaſeth, and is given daily more and more to the heart that waiteth on the Lord. Sin, the nature of it, the courſe of the mind and body in it, is diſcovered daily more and more, and the lothing and deteſting of it increaſed, as the new nature gathers ſtrength in the mind, and increaſeth in the light and power of life.

Queſt. 6. *Is there never to be any reconciliation or turning back to ſin?*

Anſ. No; but a farther removing and ſeparation from it; which ſeparation is eternal, even as the beginning of it is in an eternal nature. The ſeed, at its firſt appearance and ſpringing up, ſhutteth out ſin, as being of a contrary nature to it; and the ſtronger it groweth, the more it ſhutteth ſin out: and where it wholly leaveneth and poſſeſſeth the creature, it wholly expelleth the old leaven, and leaveth no place for it to re-enter. This is perfect ſalvation, where there is no turning back to folly any more, but a perpetual abiding in the nature of the eternal wiſdom.

Queſt. 7. *What if there be a committing of ſin after one is turned from it?*

Anſ. The repentance is not there perfected; the enemy is not there wholly caſt out, nor his ſtrength quite broken; the law is not there fulfilled, the covenant of grace is not there fully witneſſed; but the ſoul ſtill in a degree of captivity under the power of the enemy: yet if the bent of the heart be againſt the ſin committed, God chargeth it upon the enemy, and not upon the ſoul. "Now if I do that I would not, it is "no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me." Rom. vii. 20.

Queſt. 8. *But is there any ſin where there is no law? What makes ſin but the law? When a man hath travelled through*

through the law into the eternal nature, can he then commit ſin?

Anſ. Where there is no law, there can be no tranſgreſſion; but while any of that nature remains to which the law naturally belongs, there may be ſin and tranſgreſſion. Now that only is capable of being out of the reach of the law, whoſe nature is perfect, and which comprehends and cannot but bring forth the righteouſneſs of the law in it. That therefore which falleth ſhort of the righteouſneſs of the law, and pleads it is not ſin to it, is in the deceit and error from the perfection, and not in the perfect righteouſneſs, which eternally comprehends and brings forth the righteouſneſs of the law; but is not comprehended or judged by it, becauſe its nature, life, and righteouſneſs is above it.

Concerning FAITH.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is faith?*

Anſ. It is a belief in the appearances of the Lord to the ſoul, and a cleaving to, and drinking in of their virtue. There are divers appearances of the Lord, even as a quickening Spirit, quickening and enlivening the ſoul; alſo as a diſcoverer, reprover, and condemner of ſin, and juſtifier of righteouſneſs; likewiſe as a ſtrengthener and comforter of that which wants his ſtrength and comfort; and as a fountain of perfect love, ſweetneſs, and of all good, &c. Now however the Lord pleaſeth to appear, that which ſeeth, knoweth, owneth, and falleth in with his appearances, drinking in the virtue thereof, that is faith.

Queſt. 2. *By what means is faith wrought?*

Anſ. By the Word in the heart; by the living Word from which the ſoul came, and which is nigh to the ſoul. This was the Word of faith, or the Word which wrought faith under the law, Deut. xxx. This was the Word of faith which the apoſtles preached,

and

and which wrought faith under the gospel, Rom. x. This is the Word which we feel working faith in us now; yea, and which worketh it in all those in whomsoever it is wrought; though they may not know what works it: yea, this is the seed of life, from which every spiritual thing springs and grows in the heart.

Quest. 3. *How is faith received?*

Ans. In the quickening power. The seed of life shoots forth its light, its life, its nature, its virtue into the heart. The heart being touched with this, is in some measure quickened towards God, and in and from this quickening virtue faith flows into the soul. For in the death of sin, in the dead state, there is nothing but unbelief; faith therefore must needs flow from the quickenings of life.

Quest. 4. *What doth faith do in the heart?*

Ans. It uniteth to God, and separateth from sin. It beginneth and carrieth on the work of redemption in the soul. It receiveth in that which is of God, and beateth back the contrary. It keepeth the mind chaste, pure, living and fresh before the Lord. It draweth out the virtue, and sucketh in the sweetness of every appearance of God in the heart. It keepeth in the love of God, and expelleth the love to sin, creature, self, or any thing as it stands out of God. Indeed faith is the natural sucker-in of the breath of life, and the purger-out of the breath and power of death.

Quest. 5. *Wherein doth faith stand?*

Ans. In that wherein it is received, even in the quickening power. Faith must be continually kept alive by the seed of life, or it cannot live. It springs in the power, it dwells in the power, it acts in the power, and is never found out of it. Man cannot believe when he will; it is a continual gift, depending upon the continual quickenings and nourishment of that life from whence it sprang.

Quest. 6. *But doth not God withdraw? Doth not the power often clap in? Where is faith then?*

Ans.

Anſ. There is the ſecret preſence of the power, when it is not viſibly manifeſt, enabling the ſoul to keep to, and depend upon, that which is not ſeen, but truſted in, though unſeen, and not ſenſibly felt: and there is a ſecret turning from, and reſiſting of temptations, and a ſecret overcoming (the heart being kept true and intire to the Lord) while the enemy ſeemeth ſenſibly to prevail and overcome.

Queſt. 7. *Why doth the enemy ſo aſſault with unbelief, and fight ſo ſtiffly againſt the faith of the ſoul?*

Anſ. Becauſe all depends upon it. Stop that, he ſtops all; overcome that, he overcomes all. If that ſtand and abide in ſtrength, he gains nothing; but loſes by every temptation and ſeeming victory: for faith gets ground and advantage not only by a temptation, but alſo by a fall.

Concerning HOPE.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is hope?*

Anſ. The expectation of ſomewhat from the Lord, in the ſeaſon of his good-will. The expectation of the crown of life at laſt; the expectation of deliverance from ſnares and temptations at preſent; the expectation of receiving his promiſes of the divine nature, or of any mercy or bleſſing which he hath given to pray for; this is hope.

Queſt. 2. *What are the grounds of hope to the ſoul?*

Anſ. There are manifeſt and viſible grounds, or a ſecret and inviſible ground.

Queſt. 3. *What are the manifeſt and viſible grounds?*

Anſ. They are many, and of divers kinds. The Lord's love manifeſted to the ſoul; the Lord's promiſes made to the ſoul particularly, or generally to that condition wherein the ſoul is; the ſoul's experience of the Lord's helping it in former diſtreſſes; yea, the very tender nature of the Lord towards ſouls, and their deſcent from him, notwithſtanding their preſent aliena-

alienation and corrupt eſtate, is a ground of hope, where the Lord quickens it to the heart.

Queſt. 4. *What is the inviſible or ſecret ground of hope?*

Anſ. That cannot be diſcerned which is ſecret and inviſible; but yet there is ſometimes an hope in the heart, when it is not perceived, which is maintained and fed by the inviſible life, which is hid there.

Queſt. 5. *What is the nature and proper effects of hope?*

Anſ. It ſtays the mind, even in the midſt of ſtorms and tempeſts, that they do not overturn, overwhelm, and ſink the ſoul. It keeps up the head above the many waters, and keeps the heart from utterly fainting. It preſerves life in the many famines and ſtreight ſieges of the enemy. Hope of relief keeps from yielding to the enemy, and preſerves from diſtruſting the Lord. Diſtruſt cannot enter and prevail, where hope abides. Hope adds ſtrength to the ſoul in its purſuit of all that is good, and in its flying from and eſchewing all that is evil, and is the ſuccourer of faith in the needful hour: yea, how often would the faith be given up and foiled, were it not for the hope which relieves it!

Concerning LOVE.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is love?*

Anſ. What ſhall I ſay of it, or how ſhall I in words expreſs its nature! It is the ſweetneſs of life; it is the ſweet, tender, melting nature of God, flowing up through his ſeed of life into the creature, and of all things making the creature moſt like unto himſelf, both in nature and operation. It fulfils the law, it fulfils the goſpel; it wraps up all in one, and brings forth all in the oneneſs. It excludes all evil out of the heart, it perfects all good in the heart. A touch of love doth this in meaſure; perfect love doth this in fulneſs. But how can I proceed to ſpeak of it! Oh!

Oh! that the ſouls of all that fear and wait on the Lord might feel its nature fully; and then would they not fail of its ſweet overcoming operations, both towards one another, and towards enemies. The great healing, the great conqueſt, the great ſalvation is reſerved for the full manifeſtation of the love of God. His judgments, his cuttings, his hewings by the word of his mouth, are but to prepare for, but not to do, the great work of raiſing up the ſweet building of his life, which is to be done in love, and in peace, and by the power thereof. And this my ſoul waits and cries after, even the full ſpringing up of eternal love in my heart, and in the ſwallowing of me wholly into it, and the bringing of my ſoul wholly forth in it, that the life of God in its own perfect ſweetneſs may fully run forth through this veſſel, and not be at all tinctured by the veſſel, but perfectly tincture and change the veſſel into its own nature; and then ſhall no fault be found in my ſoul before the Lord, but the ſpotleſs life be fully enjoyed by me, and become a perfectly-pleaſant ſacrifice to my God.

Oh! how ſweet is love! how pleaſant is its nature! how takingly doth it behave itſelf in every condition, upon every occaſion, to every perſon, and about every thing! How tenderly, how readily, doth it help and ſerve the meaneſt! How patiently, how meekly, doth it bear all things, either from God or man, how unexpectedly ſoever they come, or how hard ſoever they ſeem! How doth it believe, how doth it hope, how doth it excuſe, how doth it cover even that which ſeemeth not to be excuſable, and not fit to be covered! How kind is it even in its interpretations and charges concerning miſcarriages! It never overchargeth, it never grates upon the ſpirit of him whom it reprehends; it never hardens, it never provokes; but carrieth a meltingneſs and power of conviction with it. This is the nature of God; this, in the veſſels capacitated to receive and bring it forth in its glory, the power of enmity is not able to ſtand againſt, but falls before, and is overcome by.

Con-

Concerning OBEDIENCE.

Queſt. *WHAT is obedience?*

Anſ. It is the ſubjection of the ſoul to the law of the Spirit; which ſubjection floweth from, and is ſtrengthened by, love. To wait to know the mind of God, and perform his will in every thing, through the virtue of the principle of life revealed within, this is the obedience of faith. This is the obedience of the ſeed, conveyed into the creature by the ſeed, as it is made partaker of the ſeed. He is the ſon who naturally doth the will; he is the faithful witneſs who teſtifies concerning the will; yea, and he is the choice ſervant alſo.

Mark how every thing in the kingdom, every ſpiritual thing, refers to Chriſt, and centers in him. His nature, his virtue, his preſence, his power makes up all. Indeed he is all in all to a believer, only variouſly manifeſted and opened in the heart by the Spirit. He is the volume of the whole book, every leaf and line whereof ſpeaks of him, and writes out him in ſome or other of his ſweet and beautiful lineaments. So that if I ſhould yet ſpeak farther of other things, as of meekneſs, tenderneſs, humility, mercy, gentleneſs, patience, long-ſuffering, contentedneſs, &c. (all which I had much rather ſhould be read in his book, even in the living book of the eternal Word, than in my writings) I ſhould but ſpeak further of his nature brought up, manifeſted, and diſplaying itſelf in and through the creatures, by his turning the wheel of his life in their hearts. But my ſpirit haſteneth from words, therefore can I not but cut ſhort and paſs over theſe openings in me, that neither my own ſoul nor others may fix or ſtay upon words concerning the thing, but may ſink in ſpirit into the feeling of the life itſelf, and may learn what it is to enjoy it there, and to be comprehended of it, and ceaſe ſtriving to know or comprehend concerning it. And then I am ſure he that hath a taſte of this cannot but be willing to

ſell all the knowledge that can be held in the creaturely veſſel, for that knowledge which is living, and is laid up in that treaſury, into which the thief and corrupter can by no means ſteal or break. Yet ſomewhat I cannot but further add concerning peace, joy, liberty, prayer; as alſo concerning regeneration, juſtification, ſanctification, reconciliation, and redemption; becauſe my heart believeth that it may prove ſerviceable to ſome, in the guidance and mercy of the good Spirit of the Lord.

Concerning PEACE, or REST.

TRUE peace is the ſtillneſs, the quietneſs, the ſatisfiedneſs of the heart in God, which floweth from and with the Spirit of life in the ſoul, that is ſubjected to Chriſt. There is indeed a kind of peace; to wit, a falſe peace or reſt in ſin and unrighteouſneſs; but this is not truly natural to the ſoul while it laſts, and is likewiſe ſuddenly diſturbed when the true light ſhines in the heart, and when God's witneſs awakens it. Then "there is no peace to the wicked, ſaith my "God." Oh! the trouble and perplexity of the ſinner, when the light of God's Spirit makes his heart and ways manifeſt to him! yea, and that ſoul alſo, which in its day of viſitation pants after the Lord, and is willing to give up to the guidance of his light, and waiteth for the directing and redeeming power of his Spirit; yet oh! what a bitter war, noiſe, and tumults doth the enemy raiſe within! How doth it diſturb every ſtep of his way, and ſtrive to darken every drawing, motion, and leading of the ſoul out of his dominion! But as the redemption is felt, the ſnares broken, the life manifeſted, and the ſoul feels itſelf entered into the nature and obedience of it; ſo the peace ſprings, and the reſt in God is taſted of and enjoyed.

Con-

Concerning JOY.

JOY is the gladneſs of the heart in God, chiefly ſpringing from the refreſhings and preſence of his life, which carries through and over all, even the greateſt trials and tribulations. When the poor, panting, weary ſoul, which hath longed after God, and long felt the bitterneſs and miſery of its ſeparation, begins to feel his love, and its union with him, in his letting of it forth into the heart, and its aſſurance of his goodneſs, righteouſneſs, power, wiſdom, and ſalvation, oh! how is it filled with joy and delight in the earneſt of its portion! Now ſaith it, in the ſtrength of life, *My ſoul rejoiceth in God my Saviour; for he hath regarded my low eſtate, his bowels have rolled towards me, his day-ſpring from on high, and his mercies from beneath, have viſited me; and I who long have been deſolate and forſaken, have now found favour in the eyes of my beloved, and my heart feeleth (in meaſure) that I am his, and he mine, who hath touched me, won my heart, undertaken for me, and what can ſeparate? He hath tied the knot himſelf, and what can break it! And how can my heart but rejoice in his name over all my fears, falſe reaſonings, doubts, and miſgivings, which long held me captive, and withheld my eye from reading love, the which was written both in his heart, and in his dealings towards me?*

Concerning LIBERTY.

LIBERTY is the enlargedneſs of the heart in the Spirit of the Lord, wherein it hath ſcope in all that is good, and is ſhut out of all that is evil. The Spirit of the Lord is free, and maketh free. The earthly ſpirit is in bondage with her children; but they which are begotten of the Lord, and wrapped up in his Spirit, find the power and freedom of the new life therein, and are thereby perfectly out of the reach

of that, which (let into the mind) hath power to captivate and enthrall. Therefore it is not all manner of ſcope and latitude, wherein the true liberty conſiſteth; but in the ſcope and latitude proper to its nature. And thus the infinite and unlimitable One is limited, (if it be proper ſo to expreſs it) even within the limits and bounds of his own nature and Spirit, which he cannot tranſgreſs, or in any wiſe conſent to do what is contrary thereunto.

Concerning PRAYER.

PRAYER is the breath of the living child to the Father of life, in that Spirit which quickened it, which giveth it the right ſenſe of its wants, and ſuitable cries proportionable to its ſtate, in the proper ſeaſon thereof. So that mark: prayer is wholly out of the will of the creature, wholly out of the time of the creature, wholly out of the power of the creature; in the Spirit of the Father, who is the fountain of life, and giveth forth breathings of life to his child at his pleaſure.

Concerning REGENERATION.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is regeneration?*

Anſ. It is the new-birth of the creature, or its being born again of the immortal ſeed of the Word of eternal life.

Queſt. 2. *How is this birth obtained?*

Anſ. By the ſpringing up of the ſeed of eternal life in the heart, and the heart's being changed into it, and brought forth in it.

Queſt. 3. *How is the heart changed into and brought forth in the ſeed?*

Anſ. By being leavened with the power and virtue of its nature by a new ſap received from it, which ſpreadeth

ſpreadeth by degrees, and at length becometh all in it.

Queſt. 4. *How is this virtue received from the ſeed?*

Anſ. In giving up to it in the faith which flows from it; this lets in the new ſap and nature of life, which purgeth out the old.

Queſt. 5. *How doth the ſeed appear and manifeſt itſelf, and how is it given up to in the faith?*

Anſ. It doth appear in its own light and quickening virtue, which diſcovers the darkneſs and death of ſin, and draws the heart, which it makes willing, out of it. Now its drawings being felt, it is well known, the thing required by it made manifeſt, there is a faith herein begotten in the heart; and then the ſoul is to give up in the obedience of the faith, without conſulting with the reaſonings and wiſdom of the fleſhly mind, where the enemy lies ready to damp this light of faith, and betraying into the unbelief.

Concerning JUSTIFICATION.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is juſtification?*

Anſ. It is the owning or clearing of a perſon in his obedience to the Lord; or the pardoning, paſſing by, and ſo clearing him from his diſobedience.

Queſt. 2. *Who is it that juſtifieth?*

Anſ. It is the Lord, who giveth the law to mankind according to his pleaſure; he it is that is alſo the judge of man's obedience or diſobedience thereto, and the proper juſtifier or condemner of him therein.

Queſt. 3. *But is not man in a fallen ſtate? And can he ſo obey God in any thing as to be juſtified by him?*

Anſ. Man is indeed fallen, and hath no ſtrength or will of himſelf to ſerve or obey the Lord; but there is a viſitation of life and love (for Chriſt's ſake) iſſuing forth towards mankind in general, wherein there goeth forth a quickening life, and a ſecret hidden virtue, which giveth ability to the hearts which the Lord

maketh willing to follow his drawings. And this diſpenſation is ſo managed by the Lord, that no man periſheth for want of power, but only from the ſtubbornneſs and choice of his own will. So that man's deſtruction is indeed of himſelf every where; but no where of God, whoſe delight is to ſave, and not to deſtroy, his creature, under every diſpenſation of his life.

Queſt. 4. *But many men do not know Chriſt, and how can they obtain juſtification by him?*

Anſ. There is a double knowledge of Chriſt; outwardly, by a relation concerning him, and inwardly, by feeling the virtue of his nature. Now thus many know Chriſt, who know him not outwardly. They may have ſomewhat ſown, touched, and raiſed by God, of the nature of Chriſt in them, and in this they may know the Father, and ſpring of the ſame nature, and be gathered in heart into it, and ſo come within the line or compaſs of the ſpiritual life, wherein the ſpiritual bleſſings and mercies run and flow through Chriſt, and for his ſake. And ſo here they may ſee their ſins, and be loaded with them, and feel the life and virtue that waſheth from them, and that it is in the mere mercy of God, and ſo be drawn out of ſelf into the nature, life, virtue, and power of Chriſt, which is conveyed in ſubſtance in the inward feeling and new-creating of the heart.

Queſt. 5. *How is this juſtification wrought?*

Anſ. By faith in the virtue which floweth from Chriſt. God letting in of the nature of his Son into the heart, and begetting therein ſomewhat of his own likeneſs, in which he draweth, and which he giveth to believe in: this faith is imputed by God for righteouſneſs, in every heart wherever it is found: and where this faith in the living virtue is found, there God blotteth out the iniquities for his name's ſake; yea, and remiſſion is felt in that which is made living. And there is one near, who hath power to bind or looſe in the conſcience, according to the nature of the diſpenſation; and who doth bind or looſe in every

diſ-

diſpenſation as he findeth cauſe: But all looſing of ſins is for Chriſt's ſake, and through his blood; though every one in every diſpenſation is not able diſtinctly ſo to read it. Yea, under the law, the remiſſion was by this ſacrifice; though many of the Jews could not read the type. The promiſe is to the ſeed of the kingdom, and to man in the ſeed; and there it reacheth him whenever it findeth him: for in all his gatherings into, and being found in, that, he is bleſſed.

Queſt. 6. *Then may a man be juſtified who never heard outwardly of Chriſt?*

Anſ. If he feel the ſeed of life, be overcome by its nature, give up to its law, as it is made manifeſt in his heart, abhor the nature and law of ſin and death, and thus in ſoul cleave unto the Lord, and follow him as he pleaſeth to lead, the Spirit and life of the Lord cannot but herein juſtify him; and the grace and mercy of the Lord cannot withhold giving him out his pardon for his ſins paſt, (and alſo paſs by his future frailties) although he diſtinctly know not how to ſue out and plead it. The redemption and pardon of ſin is through the unlimited grace of God: which is not reſtrained to the outward knowledge of the creature, but iſſueth forth according to the capacity that God creates any where to receive it. Life, mercy, grace, pardon, &c. iſſue forth from God into the veſſels of every kind, under every diſpenſation that he prepareth for them: and the inward ſenſe of life is the thing that God aims at in all his diſpenſations, and not the outward ſkill or knowledge, but thruſts that by in every diſpenſation, except as his inward life and virtue is found in it.

Queſt. 7. *How is juſtification by grace?*

Anſ. No man in his fallen eſtate can deſerve any thing of God. It is of grace that God viſits him by any diſpenſation of his love and mercy. It is of grace that he giveth him any ability to turn unto him. It is of grace that he accepts him in turning, giving him a ſhare in the ranſom he hath found, which is ſtill

in God's eye in whatever he does for man, however man may be off from it. Indeed ſuch is the weakneſs of man, that no man can be juſtified by the works of obedience that he can perform under any diſpenſation, but only by the remiſſion and ability which he receives from grace, and wherein alone he can be preſerved unto the end by grace. So that in every diſpenſation it is grace alone that ſaves, (through the redemption which is in Jeſus Chriſt) though from the eye of man this hath been very much hidden in divers diſpenſations. Yet, notwithſtanding, the broken and humble-hearted-ones, (who have felt the inward power of life to change their natures, and to preſerve them in that which God hath begotten in them) the grace prevaileth to ſave in every diſpenſation. For it is not the outwardneſs of any diſpenſation, but the virtue let forth from God in the heart, which ſaves. And by this the Lord can ſave under any diſpenſation, and without this there is no ſalvation in any.

Queſt. 8. *What is the righteouſneſs that juſtifieth in the ſight of God?*

Anſ. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt alone. This conveyed to the creature in and through the ſeed, and brought forth in the creature by the ſeed, and the creature united to Chriſt in the ſeed; here is the juſtification of the life. Indeed there is alſo a juſtification according to the works of the law, or the creaturely obedience, which the Lord will ſo far own as the creature is able to bring it forth: but it is the obedience of faith which is the pleaſure of his ſoul. And the other can hardly ever be perfect, ſo as the Lord can ſpy no fault in it, and may alſo eaſily fail, depending upon the brittle nature and ſpirit of the creature; whereas this is of an abiding nature, having its root not in the creature, but in the ſeed. Therefore, O all that love life! deſcend from the outwardneſs of diſpenſation into the hidden ſeed, where we may feel the living God, and all that are in any living diſpenſation of his life, as the Lord pleaſeth to let our ſpirits into him, and into one another. And wait for the light and

power

power of this bleſſed day (which in the tender mercy of the Lord hath dawned from on high upon us) which diſcovereth and maketh things known, not after the letter of a diſpenſation, but by manifeſting their inward nature, power, and virtue in the endleſs life, of which Chriſt is now become the miniſter in the living ſanctuary in thoſe whoſe hearts he hath new-formed, and dwelleth in.

Concerning SANCTIFICATION.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is ſanctification?*

Anſ. It is the cleanſing of the veſſel by the Spirit of the Lord, from the pollution both of fleſh and ſpirit.

Queſt. 2. *And by what doth the Spirit of the Lord cleanſe the veſſel from its pollution?*

Anſ. By the living truth, which hath power in it to waſh away the deceit, enmity, impurity, and whatever evil hath formerly defiled, or may yet again at any time defile the veſſel.

Queſt. 3. *How doth the ſoul receive this cleanſing or purifying from the Spirit of the Lord?*

Anſ. In its obedience to his truth made manifeſt in the heart; for thereby the power of the Word enters into the ſoul, and ſheds abroad its living virtue in the ſoul.

Queſt. 4. *What then is chiefly to be minded by the ſoul, that would be cleanſed from its filthineſs?*

Anſ. The obedience of faith, or the obedience which ſprings from faith. For as all the benefits and bleſſings of the law depended upon obedience to the law; ſo all the benefits and bleſſings of the goſpel depend upon obedience to the goſpel. Yea, and this is the glory and excellency of the goſpel, that the principle of faith there doth that which the principle of the law could never do.

Concern-

Concerning RECONCILIATION.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is reconciliation?*
Anſ. It is a bringing together the minds and hearts of God and man into one.

Queſt. 2. *How is this wrought?*

Anſ. By taking away the enmity of man's nature, which is therein againſt God, and by planting him into, and cauſing him to grow up in, that nature and life which God loveth, whereby that is removed from man which God hateth, and which is the cauſe of ſeparation; and man brought into, and brought up in, that which is the love and delight of God's heart.

Queſt. 3. *By what is this reconciliation wrought?*

Anſ. By the Word of God's power. That comes forth from the love of God unto man; and man being gathered out of himſelf into that, the evil ſeed is thereby deſtroyed, and the good ſeed of the kingdom thereby cheriſhed, and groweth up in its ſhadow and nouriſhment.

Queſt. 4. *How doth the Word work this?*

Anſ. By winning upon man, and gathering him into its light, out of man's own darkneſs, exerciſing man various ways to empty him of himſelf, and make him weak in himſelf, and putting forth its own ſtrength in and for man, as it hath emptied and weakened him in himſelf.

Queſt. 5. *What then is man's great advantage towards reconciliation with God?*

Anſ. To become weak, to become poor, to become helpleſs, to become nothing by the frequent exerciſes of the word of reconciliation in the heart: for the poor receive the goſpel, and the weak receive God's ſtrength, and the helpleſs his mercy, and the nothingones his fulneſs.

Concern-

Concerning REDEMPTION.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is redemption?*

Anſ. It is the purchaſing of the veſſel out of the captivity and miſery of death, into the liberty and bleſſedneſs of the divine life, ſown, revealed, grown up, and perfected in the heart.

Queſt. 2. *Who is the Redeemer?*

Anſ. The Son of God, the child of God's begetting, the divine image, who naturally believes and fulfils the will of the Father, in every veſſel which it hath prepared.

Queſt. 3. *By what doth he redeem?*

Anſ. By his blood; by his life; by his power; by his nature ſown in the veſſel, and transforming the veſſel into its own likeneſs. Yea, this is indeed redemption, when the creature is changed into, and brought forth in, the image, power, nature, virtue, and divine life of him that redeemeth; and the old contrary image perfectly blotted out, by the preſence and indwelling of the new. This is perfect redemption, the leaſt meaſure whereof is redemption in a degree.

And after this ſprings up the glory of the life in the veſſel, even the glory which it had with the Father before the world was. In the nature of the life the glory is hid; it is ſown in the ſeed, it dies with the ſeed, it is raiſed with the ſeed. When Sion in any heart is built up, it is natural to the Lord to appear there in his glory; and the pure eye ſees it, and the pure heart enjoys and is one with it. So that as there is a true entrance into, fellowſhip in, and enjoyment of, the death of Chriſt; ſo is there alſo of the reſurrection and glory of the redeemed life; which is the portion and inheritance which God hath prepared for Sion, after her long deſolation and ſore widowhood; which

which he will give unto her in the ſight of all the world, whereby ſhe ſhall become the beauty, joy, and praiſe of the whole earth; who hath hitherto been the reproached, deſpiſed, and afflicted, and made a prey of, by the ſeveral ſorts of devouring ſpirits.

A POSTSCRIPT TO PROFESSORS.

THIS I am aſſured of, that it were an eaſy matter with the Lord, to give forth a literal deſcription of all the things of his kingdom, ſo exact, full and natural to the thing, as might anſwer and ſatisfy every inquiring mind. But this would not effect the work which God is now about. This would not raiſe his ſeed, which would lie dead and buried under all this, unleſs quickened and raiſed by the immediate power and life of the Father. Nay, might not the earthly ſpirit be eaſily building with this an earthly fabrick, which would not come within the meaſure of the true temple? May I ſpeak freely; I would not deny any thing of God among you, nor be an inſtrument to quench the leaſt good in any of you; but indeed I have ſeen, I have felt and known ſome of your ſnares; yet have rather ſpent the ſtrength of my ſpirit in crying to God for you, that he would break them, and diſentangle your ſouls, than in endeavours to demonſtrate

demonſtrate and manifeſt them unto you. And I am now touching at one of them, which is not the meaneſt; to wit, a getting the knowledge of things into the mind and comprehenſion, ſtriving to grow rich there, and wiſe to underſtand and diſpute about them. Indeed, this is not the poor one which receives the goſpel, and is acquainted with the power and virtue of eternal life. And if the Lord did not teach my ſoul continually to give up the outward knowledge of every thing, and preſs after the inward life, I might ſoon grow wiſe after the fleſh, but loſe the freſh oil which ſuppleth and nouriſheth me. My ſpirit boweth and preſſeth within me, in great earneſtneſs to the God of mercies, that ye may not be left behind the flock, whoſe path is living, and who follow the living footſteps of the Lamb, who leadeth by his living Spirit from life to life into his kingdom.

SOME

SOME QUESTIONS and ANSWERS,

Of deep Concernment to the

JEWS,

From one who hath been a Wreſtler and Traveller with the LORD of Life, for the Day of their Mercy and Redemption.

Queſt. 1. *WHETHER the people of the Jews do err in their hearts from the God of their fathers, (in this their ſore diſperſion and final captivity) and are not acquainted with his ways, wherein he would have them walk with him, and wait for his mercy and redemption?*

Anſ. That there is mercy towards, and redemption for, that poor ſcattered, forſaken people, my heart hath from my childhood, and doth ſtill ſtedfaſtly believe.

That there is a way wherein they are to worſhip the God of their fathers, and wait for this mercy and redemption, is alſo the belief of my heart.

But whether they do indeed know the Lord their God, and the preſent path wherein he requireth them to walk, and ſo are brought into the capacity and fitneſs for the mercy and redemption which is in the heart of the Lord towards them, that I very much doubt of, and in the tender love and good-will of my heart

heart am drawn to propoſe the conſideration thereof to them.

The grounds of this my doubt are chiefly theſe two:

1. Becauſe their fathers, who had Moſes and the prophets to inſtruct them in the law of the Lord, and in his ways of worſhip and obedience, yet did err in their hearts from the Lord their God, both under the teachings of Moſes and of the prophets. "It is a "people that do err in their heart, and they have not "known my ways," ſaid the Lord concerning them, upon forty years trial of them in the wilderneſs, Pſal. xcv. 10. And Moſes alſo complained unto all Iſrael, that notwithſtanding all that they had ſeen done by the Lord in the land of Egypt; and the great temptations, ſigns, and miracles in the wilderneſs, yet the Lord had not given them an heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and ears to hear unto this day, Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4. Neither did they more underſtand the mind of the Lord by the miniſtry of the prophets, than by Moſes; but miſunderſtood his way of worſhip, miſunderſtood his intent about their ſacrifices, and offered up the abomination of his ſoul; even when they offered up the very ſacrifices which he required, as the Spirit of the Lord in the prophets often teſtified unto them. See Iſa. i. Iſa. lxvi. Mic. vi. Ezek. xx. with many more teſtimonies of the prophets, pleading with them from the mouth of the Lord.

Now if their fathers, in the days of Moſes, and in the days of the prophets, when they had certain information from the mouth of the Lord concerning his ways, yet then did err in heart, and did not underſtand the mind of his Spirit; how much more probable is it that theſe, in the cloudy and dark day, when the light (that ſhone upon their fathers) is hid from their eyes, that theſe may miſs of the mind of the Lord, and not underſtand the way of peace and acceptance with their God?

2. Becauſe the prophets foretel of their idols cleaving to them, and their uncleanneſs not being removed, but

but their ſtubbornneſs and hardneſs remaining, until the great and terrible day of the Lord God Almighty, wherein his Spirit ſhall be poured down from on high, and they viſited and redeemed in the light and power thereof. Then ſhall Ephraim ſay to his idols, "Get "ye hence; what have I to do any more with idols?" Yea in that day "ſhall they caſt their idols to the "moles and to the bats," Iſa. ii. 20. For the Lord will cleanſe them from all their uncleanneſs, Ezek. xxxvi. 29. and take away the ſtone out of their heart, and make their ſpirits tender towards the God of their fathers; inſomuch as Ephraim ſhall ſmite upon his thigh, and bemoan his unaccuſtomedneſs to the yoke, and eternal law of the Spirit of his God, which he hath not underſtood in ſpirit, but been blinded about the ordinances of Moſes, and teſtimonies of the prophets.

Queſt. 2. *Whether the Jews can poſſibly meet with the bleſſings of the Meſſiah, while their heart errs from the God of their fathers, and they do not know his way?*

Anſ. It is utterly impoſſible, while they miſs of the path wherein bleſſedneſs is to be found, to meet with that bleſſedneſs which the path thereof alone leads to. How can the heart, in erring from God, meet with that which is alone to be found in union and walking with him? Have they met with it to this day? Or can they ever meet with it, till they be taught and led of the Lord to walk towards it? Oh! that Iſrael knew the way of life! Oh! that their heart were turned towards their God, that they might no more die, nor be eſtranged from him like the heathen, but live the life of the bleſſed, and enjoy an inheritance in the land of the living.

Queſt. 3. *Is there any way for Iſrael to be cured of the error of their heart, that their miſknowledge of God and his ways may be removed from them, and they may come to a right underſtanding, and a clearneſs of light?*

Anſ. There is balm in the land of the living, which is able to cure all the diſeaſes and diſtempers of the dead, and there is a phyſician who is able to apply it.

The

The God of Iſrael knoweth the very core of evil in the heart, and all the iſſues of death from thence, and how to take out the core, and ſtop all the iſſues of ſin, death, and miſery. The Shepherd of Iſrael underſtandeth the loſt ſtate, the wandering ſtate, the ſick ſtate of every loſt ſoul in Iſrael, and hath ſkill and remedies to recover and heal them all, Ezek. xxxiv.

Queſt. 4. *What way hath this ſkilful phyſician for the cure of the erring heart of his Iſrael, and to bring them to an acquaintance with him and his ways?*

Anſ. He hath divers, which are able thoroughly to effect it. As;

1. *By circumciſing their hearts,* or by ſprinkling clean water upon them to waſh away the filth of their hearts. With him is "the fountain of living waters," and with them can he "waſh away the filth of the "daughter of Sion;" yea, "his fire is in Sion, and "his furnace in Jeruſalem:" with him is "the ſpirit "of judgment and the ſpirit of burning," wherewith he can ſearch out and judge all the evil in the hearts of his people Iſrael, and burn it up.

2. *By creating a new heart and a new ſpirit within them.* He can, not only take away the heart of ſtone, but he can give an heart of fleſh, which ſhall be ſenſible and tender to every motion and impreſſion of his Spirit, as the other was dull and hard.

3. *He can write his law in their heart,* that they may no more read in the oldneſs of the letter, where life can never be learned, (which is to paſs away, for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof) but in the newneſs of the Spirit, where the new eye eaſily reads and underſtands what God writes in the new heart and mind.

4. *He can put his Spirit within them, and cauſe them to walk in his ways,* and to keep the ſtatutes and judgments which God writes in this new book, even the renewed heart; for this is the book of the new covenant, theſe are the tables thereof, wherein God writes the law of life eternal for his Iſrael, wherein they are

to read and live for ever. And happy is that Iſraelite who waits for, and receives, the Spirit. To him none of the commandments of life are grievous, being all quickened to him in and by the Spirit. So that the more the Lord writes in his heart, the happier is he; he thereby receiving more of the life and power of God's Spirit, and learning thereby more of his God, and travelling there-through further with him into his purity and divine ſweetneſs.

Queſt. 5. *What way is there for Iſrael to come by this cure?*

Anſ. None but God's covenant, the covenant which God made with their fathers. Not the covenant of the law by Moſes, but the covenant before the law, which was alſo renewed by Moſes, but was not that covenant which God made with them in Horeb, but a covenant beſides, as they may read, Deut. xxix. Alas! alas! man can never come to life by his obedience; he ſtill falls ſhort there; but by receiving the promiſed ſeed, he comes to be heir of the promiſe with the ſeed, and finds the obedience of the ſeed brought forth in him, through the grace and mercy of God, which breaketh forth upon his Iſrael. Oh! that the hearts of Iſrael after the fleſh were circumciſed to hear this ſound, that they might be turned in ſpirit towards the God of life and ſalvation, that from him they might receive the ſeed of life into their veſſels, that their hearts might be purified and made living by the ſeed, and they might there meet with that, which their fathers could never meet with by the law of Moſes; nor indeed is never ſo to be obtained, but by the promiſe to their fathers, which was before the law. And this muſt be the way of their reſtoration into favour with God; to wit, not the covenant which God made with their fathers, when he took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, but the covenant by which God writes the law and knowledge of himſelf in the heart, Jer. xxxi. 32, 33.

Queſt.

Queſt. 6. *How may Iſrael come into this covenant with God? Or is there any thing for them to do, that they may enter into it, and reap the bleſſings of it?*

Anſ. They muſt mind the ſmall beginnings of it, and ſubject to God therein, that they may know its further growth and progreſs in them. He that withſtands the beginning of a thing, can never come to the end thereof. Now the bleſſedneſs is chiefly in the end; but it is not found and enjoyed but by him that meets with the beginning, and ſo by degrees travels along till he comes to the end. And here is a great myſtery, which the wiſdom of man cannot learn or underſtand; in that, though the greateſt bleſſings are contained in this covenant, yet the beginnings of it are the ſmalleſt and moſt contemptible. The ſeed of the promiſe, the ſeed of the kingdom, is the leaſt of all ſeeds. Man eaſily overlooks it; or if he have a little glimmering of it, readily deſpiſes it, as unlikely ever to have that in it, or to bring that to paſs for the ſoul, which it deſires and expects. Yet there is no other way to the kingdom, but by this ſeed of the kingdom opening and growing in the heart, and gathering the heart into itſelf, leavening it (by its ſpreading) with the leaven of life eternal, and purging out the ſour leaven of ſin and death. This then is the path of life; thou muſt wait to feel the ſeed of the kingdom ſown in thy heart by the good ſeedſman, and then wait for thy gathering into it, and growth in it; and by thy ſubjection unto it, and its overſpreading thee with the power of life eternal (which is in it, though hidden from thee) thou wilt find ſin and death, and the power of hell, vanquiſhed in thy heart, and thy heart fitted for the God of thy life to dwell and appear in, whoſe dwelling and appearance there will make thee completely happy. Only if thou wouldſt come out of thy captivity by the enemy of thy ſoul (whereof thy preſent outward captivity is but a ſhadow) into the life and reſt of thy God; take heed of deſpiſing the day of ſmall things, or the low voice of thy God in thy heart; for therein are the beginnings

of life. And thou muſt begin at the loweſt ſtep that the God of thy life chooſeth for thee (and find that wiſdom ſhut out, which would begin or go on otherwiſe, than the Lord ſeeth fit to lead and teach) if ever thou enter into the path of life, or walk on therein with thy God.

Queſt. 7. *How may I know this ſeed of life, or feel when God begins to ſow it in my heart, that I may not turn from the ſmall beginnings thereof, but may find an entrance into this bleſſed covenant of God with my fathers before the law?*

Anſ. The word or voice of this ſeed is nigh thee, and it hath a living teſtimony with it for good, and againſt evil. It hath a living ſparkling in the heart, whereby it is felt and known by thoſe that wait for its appearance. It naturally turneth from the evil and towards the good; and in its moving and appearing in thee, it will be turning thee towards that which it naturally loves, and from that which it naturally hates. In any ſuch ſtirring in thy heart, there is the beginning of light eternal to ſhine upon thy tabernacle; and by giving up and being gathered into its warnings and motions, thou wilt feel a touch of life, even a quickening and warmth towards good, and a beginning of deadneſs and diſunion with that which is evil. And as this is waited for more and more, it will appear more and more in the ſeaſons it ſees fit; and as it finds entrance into thee, ſo will it lead thee into its covenant with its God. Remember, therefore, what Moſes ſaid to thy fathers concerning the word of this covenant "It is very nigh unto thee, in thy "mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayeſt do it," Deut. xxx. 14. Thy fathers never knew the virtue of this covenant, but were drowned in miſery for want of minding it. And if thou wert gathered into it, thou wouldſt meet with circumciſion of heart, and the new creation of thy mind and ſpirit, and the writing of the eternal law of life there, and the putting of the Holy Spirit of God into thee; all which are contained in this covenant, yea, wrapped up in the very

very ſeed thereof, which is (in the Lord's times and ſeaſons) ſmiting the ſeed of the evil-doer in the hearts of the ſons of men, and ſtriving to gather them out of the diſobedient ſtate and nature, into the obedience of the glimmerings of his light in their hearts; which becomes a law of life and power in them, as it finds entrance into, and place in, them. Therefore, O ye ſons of Abraham after the fleſh; wait for, know, and believe in the light of this covenant, and give up to be gathered into the holy ſeed thereof, that ye may become his children after the Spirit, in this new covenant, in this living covenant, wherein all that enter live in Spirit and power to the God of Abraham; and not by the works of the law of Moſes, but by faith in the living ſeed, become heirs and inheritors of the promiſe of eternal life, which is to Abraham and his ſeed for ever.

O poor wandering Jew! wait to hear the cry of wiſdom's voice in thy ſtreets, diſcovering unto thee, and counſelling thee againſt, the evil of thy heart and ways, by the word which is very nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. And be won upon by the voice of wiſdom; give it thy heart, let its power enter into thee. Take up its croſs, be willing to be bound by it from what thy heart would run after, and learn of it to draw in its yoke, that all may be yoked down and ſubdued in thee, which makes thee miſerable, that thou mayeſt find a place and honour in wiſdom's courts, and be adorned with her ornaments, and partake of her durable riches.

Watch unto that which reproves thee in thy heart, and watch unto its reproofs, that thou mayeſt be reformed by it, and transformed into its nature, and then thou wilt become a Jew indeed; even a Jew inward, born of the immortal ſeed of the divine wiſdom.

And be not diſcouraged, either for want of light to diſtinguiſh between the good and the evil, or for want of power, to turn from the one, or to the other, O tender-hearted ones, who find a warmth and a wil-

lingneſs within to give up to the Lord: but wait his ſeaſon, and hope in his tender bowels, in the midſt of all the roarings and cruel uſages of the enemy, who will be ſtriving to the utmoſt to keep his hold of his captive, and to keep it back from travelling out of his dominions of death and darkneſs, towards the land of life, light, and peace eternal! I have had a very hard travel, and have felt his power and cruelty beyond meaſure, yet the Lord my God hath helped me, and my breathings abound toward the God of my life for his helping hand unto all that are in heart turned towards him, how difficult, intricate, and impoſſible ſoever the enemy ſtrives to make the path of life unto them. Oh! remember the mercy of the Lord towards your fathers, who never felt the ſtrength of the love of this covenant, which the Lord is now gathering his ſpiritual Iſrael into; how he pitied them, how he forgave them, how he viſited them with loving-kindneſs and mercy time after time! What a ſtiff-necked people they were when he firſt choſe them; how ready to run a whoring from him, and rebel afterwards. And ſurely much more is to be forgiven in this covenant, and much more is the help and healing thereof; only let the heart be true to him according to the virtue and power of this covenant; yea, and wait to receive that alſo of him; for it is the fruit and bleſſing of the covenant in which God healeth the backſlidings of his Iſrael, and loveth them freely. Amen, Amen; O Lord God of everlaſting and moſt tender bowels of compaſſion, ſaith my ſoul!

ISAAC PENINGTON.

SOME

SOME QUERIES CONCERNING THE ORDER and GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH of CHRIST.

Query 1. WHETHER Chriſt, who is the Head, Lord, King, &c. hath not appointed a ſpiritual order and government to be in his church and congregation?

Query 2. Whether a ſpiritual order and government is not uſeful, profitable, and neceſſary, for the well-being and right-managing of this ſpiritual body and holy ſociety in the faith and life of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? In natural ſocieties, natural government and order is profitable and neceſſary; and is not ſpiritual government as profitable and neceſſary in ſpiritual ſocieties?

Query 3. Did not Chriſt give power of government to his apoſtles and miniſters, at the firſt publication of his everlaſting goſpel? All power was given him in heaven and in earth; and did not he, who had all power given him, give power to his apoſtles and miniſters to preach his everlaſting goſpel to the world, to gather his ſheep out of the world, and to watch over them, overſee

them, reprove, exhort, admoniſh, build up in the holy faith, and cut off and caſt out that which was unholy, and would diſpute againſt, but not ſubmit unto, the Spirit, life, and power of truth?

Query 4. Did not Chriſt give them gifts alſo anſwerable; ſpirits of diſcerning, that they might be eyes to the body; and quick ears, that they might hear for the body? For though the Lord hath given every one an eye and an ear, as to themſelves; yet every one is not made by the Lord an eye or ear unto the body; but this is appointed for, and given to, thoſe to whom the Lord pleaſes, who hath ordered all things wiſely, carefully and tenderly for the good of all.

Query 5. Were there not titles given them ſuitable to their offices and ſervices in this kind, as paſtors or ſhepherds after God's heart, according to the promiſe of the new covenant, overſeers or biſhops, ſuch as watch for the ſoul; ſuch as were not only to lay the foundation, but alſo carry on the building even to perfection, even till they were able to preſent the gathered and quickened ſouls a chaſte virgin to Chriſt? and were they not to watch againſt, teſtify againſt, and in the power and authority of the Lord to ſtrike at, all that was contrary, and would endeavour to interrupt, overturn, and deſtroy their work, which was of, in, and from the Lord?

Query 6. Whether the body and common members of the churches were not to hearken to theſe ("He that knoweth God, heareth us," 1 John iv. 6); to obey them in the Lord, to ſubmit to this miniſtry, and their work in it, in the Lord; to receive the word of truth and holy exhortations and admonitions, milked out by theſe to them from the breaſt of life? And were not they that did hearken and obey commended? And were not the other that were not ſubjected, but ſlighted them, and their miniſtry and authority, teſtified againſt as diſorderly and unruly?

Query

Query 7. Were there not ſome reliques of this order and government all along the apoſtaſy, in the true church and miniſtry thereof? For there hath been a church and a miniſtry all along the apoſtaſy, bleſſed be the name of the Lord; though not ſo viſible and outwardly glorious, as many (who have erred from the Spirit and way of truth, and are out of the holy underſtanding) would make it. It is true, the church hath been as in a wilderneſs, deſolate, as a woman forſaken, as a widow, bereft of her huſband, ſtripped of her children, her viſage marred, her witneſſes mourning, nothing of her beauty, former eſtate or glory, to be diſcerned or found out; yet all hath been preſerved in the root, and there have been ſome ſhootings and ſproutings of it forth, which have been inwardly felt by that which is of God in the heart, though not outwardly ſeen by man's eye. Thus the witneſſes have had a miniſtry, have had the teſtimony of Jeſus, even the Spirit of propheſy, all this dark night of apoſtaſy, and in it have ſpoken mourningly to the world, and to the captivated ſouls, which that which was of God in his hath hearkened to; and there hath been a bowing and ſubjection of ſpirit in the Lord. O read this, and praiſe the name of the Lord, for his mercy to his in former generations, ye who are now gathered into his pure light and living power, from whom the night is paſt, and on whom the day, the everlaſting day-ſpring from on high, is riſen.

Query 8. After the apoſtaſy, doth not God renew his commiſſion, and ſend forth his angel (for they are all but one) to preach his everlaſting goſpel? And doth not he give them power to preach to the world, and to gather thoſe, that hear the everlaſting voice through them, into holy aſſemblies, ſeparated in ſpirit, nature, and appearance from the world? And have they not authority and gifts, as well to build up as to plant?

plant? And ought not thoſe that are gathered by them, as well to be ſubject to the light, Spirit, power, and authority of the Lord in them, as the former to the former miniſters of the Lord? Oh! that the world knew them; Oh! that the world knew the appearance of God in them! Surely then they would bow to the word of truth, and the glorious appearance thereof; and happineſs both inward and outward would break forth upon the earth. There would be no miſery, ſorrow, nor diſtreſs in nations, if the diſpenſations of life from God had but their courſe in the earth; yea, nations and perſons, that are now deadly ſick, would ſoon be healed, did they but eat of the leaves of the tree of life, which are appointed by God for their healing, and can eaſily heal thoſe wounds, and repair thoſe breaches, which the wiſdom or counſels of man cannot heal or repair. And oh! that they that are gathered might keep and be preſerved in that ſenſe and ſubjection, which they had and received from the Lord in the day of their convincement. Oh! how beautiful, how precious, how glorious was the miniſtry and miniſters of God in their eye then! And to thoſe that are ſtill there, they are ſtill precious; and to thoſe that grow there, they are yet more precious. But thoſe that enter into, or are enſnared in another thing, which leadeth from the true Spirit, loſe the ſight and ſenſe which they then had, and inſtead thereof are filled with prejudices and wiſe reaſonings, which to them may ſeem very ſtrong and undeniable, though truth, and the true ſpiritual eye, ſenſe, and underſtanding eaſily pierces through them, and preſerveth thoſe, who abide ſingle in it, to the Lord.

Now againſt this holy order and government appointed by God, there may ariſe in ſome hearts ſome ſuch objections as theſe following.

Object.

Object. 1. *But is not this a turning away from the measure of life in a man's own vessel, to another man's measure?*

Ans. Waiting on God in his ordinances and appointments, and upon the ministry which he hath set up, the measure of life in him teacheth; and it is not a turning from the measure, but a subjecting to the Lord in the measure of his life, so to teach and do. The measure of his life taught me thus to do at first, and teacheth me to do so still; and will teach so still, all that hearken to it. It did not teach subjection in the apostles days to the ministry then, and another thing now to the ministry now. But Christ is the same to-day as yesterday; his life the same, his Spirit the same, its doctrine and teaching the same: and that of God in the conscience within answers the pure voice when it comes to the ear without. If life speak in one vessel, and its voice be not heard or owned by another vessel, the pure ear (in that other vessel) is not at that time open, but there is somewhat there that obstructs. And if the pure ear of the sheep be not open to hear the voice of the Shepherd, but it be accounted strange, it is much if the other ear in that vessel be not opened to hear the voice of the stranger, and to look upon it as the voice of the Shepherd, it agreeing with that, and answering to that, which now goeth for the voice of the measure of life in that heart. He that hath an ear, let him hear; for it is easy being taken in this snare, and the danger thereof is very great.

Object. 2. *Is not the least measure of life in any vessel (if subjected to, waited on, and believed in) sufficient to instruct and build up into a perfect man in God?*

Ans. The sufficiency of the grace of God, turned to, and waited upon, there is nothing in my heart either to undervalue myself, or to teach others so to do. Nor when God did appoint a ministry to gather and build up his church, do I believe he did intend therein to undervalue the sufficiency of his grace: yea, I verily believe, that the grace of God, turned and

and hearkened to, and followed by, any ſoul in the darkeſt part of the earth, hath ſufficiency in it to ſave, and will ſave that ſoul, though there be none outwardly to miniſter to it, or help it. Yet this I alſo believe, that as there is a ſufficiency in every meaſure of life to the work God hath appointed for that meaſure; ſo there is a greater ſufficiency in the growth and fuller proportion of life; and the leſſer, the weaker, the poor, the afflicted, the babes, are to be helped by the ſtronger, eſpecially in their darkneſſes, afflictions, temptations, &c. And ſo the greater and ſtronger in the life, Spirit, and power of the Lord, is a ſtrength and bleſſing to the weaker; which the weaker making uſe of in the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, (in the ſenſe and benefit of the ſweet help and relief which often the Lord pleaſeth to give forth thereby) will find juſt cauſe, and be often drawn, to bleſs the name of the Lord for.

The meaſure of life in the veſſel teacheth to ſubject to the Spirit of the Lord, and his life in others; which the meaſure of life in any never refuſeth, but ſtill knoweth (when awake and living in the veſſel) its own, and hath (at leaſt) a ſecret ſenſe of it, and unity with it. But that which pretends to ſet up the meaſure of life as a teacher, otherwiſe than God hath appointed, and in oppoſition to the teaching and miniſtry which he hath appointed, and to his gift in thoſe veſſels, which is as well for the building up and perfecting of the body, as for the gathering; that is another thing in that veſſel that doth ſo, than the meaſure of life; another ſpirit, another nature, another ear, than that that firſt heard. And though it ſeem to cry up the ſufficiency of the meaſure of life, and to plead for that (and perhaps the creature thinks it is really ſo); yet this is not the intent of the ſpirit in the veſſel, but to cry up itſelf, and to make its voice go for the voice of the meaſure of life: and ſo ſuch err from the faith, the truth, the Spirit, the meaſure of life, and are in the nature, ſpirit, and meaſure of another thing; which is indeed death, though they ſee

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it not, but look upon themſelves as glorioufly living, and abiding in the pure doctrine and principle above others.

Now to help theſe a little out of the ſnares and deep entanglements of the enemy, if the Lord pleaſe, I would earneſtly preſs the conſideration of this upon them. Did not the apoſtles preach up the meaſure of life, the grace of God in their day, Chriſt within, the word of faith nigh in the mouth and heart, the anointing within, its ſufficiency to teach all things, &c. And yet did they ſo preach it as to overthrow the miniſtry, or the gifts or ſervice either towards them that were without, or them that were within? Had they not power over them in the Lord? Were they not to teach them, to inſtruct them, to build them up in the holy faith, and alſo to watch againſt wolves and devouring ſpirits, which would ſtrive to enter the flock in ſheep's clothing, (and as preachers of righteouſneſs) to make a prey of the innocent life in the upright-hearted, if poſſible?

Object. 3. *But thoſe who have miniſtered from the Lord, and whoſe miniſtry I have felt and owned, and in the diſtreſs and affliction of my ſoul have had recourſe to, hoping that they might have a ſenſe of my condition, and give me proper advice; yet they, inſtead thereof, have turned me to his witneſs that wounded me, counſelling me to wait on the Lord there. And have they not alſo told us, that if they themſelves ſhould turn from the things they have declared, this truth would abide for ever; to wit, that man is to keep to the meaſure of life in his particular?*

Anſ. It is true; a man is to keep to the meaſure of life in his own particular. They taught this then; they teach it now. We practiſed it then; we are to practiſe it now. In this meaſure of life we received them then; and in this meaſure of life (if we abide ſtill in it) we ſhall receive them now, and feel their growth in the ability, gift, and power of the Lord.

And when any come to them for advice, they are to wait on the Lord, to feel in him their ſtate who come, and to give forth what the Lord gives them; whether words

words from the Lord to the party concerning his ſtate, or directions to retire in, and wait for, his more immediate appearance in their own meaſures. For when we feel the preſence and mighty power of God in them, we are too apt to look at them, and then a word may come (proper to our eſtates) to recall us to retire to our meaſure. And when we feel immediate relief from the Lord, and his appearing to us in our retiredneſs in our own ſpirits, then we may be apt to deſpiſe the gifts and ſervice of others; and then another *word* may come from them, proper to our ſtate then, to warn us not to deſpiſe propheſying, or the gifts, power, and authority of life in others. Now both theſe are proper, uſeful, and weighty in their ſeaſons, when given forth by the Spirit of the Lord. Nor are they contradictory one to the other, but ſubſervient in their ſeaſons and places, which that which is of God feels; but that which is erred from God, and joined to another (under a falſe repreſentation and belief of things) feels not, but finds a ſeeming difference, and ſets them at variance one with another, as if they could not ſtand together. And this is the falſe nature, the falſe ſpirit, the falſe appearance of life, which appears as if it were the meaſure of the pure true life; but is not. This is the falſe woman, the falſe wiſdom, whoſe heart is as ſnares and nets, and her hands bands. Whoſo pleaſeth God (abiding in the meaſure of his truth) ſhall eſcape her; but the ſinner (that departs therefrom) ſhall be taken by her. Therefore fear the Lord, come to that which firſt convinced; to the firſt truth, to the firſt ſenſe, to the firſt love, &c. and all theſe imaginations of the mind, and ſubtil devices of the enemy, will fly away, and thy poor entangled ſoul be delivered, as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowler.

If the enemy ſhould directly cry out againſt God, or his Chriſt, or his grace, or the meaſure of his truth, he would eaſily be eſpied and turned from. Therefore he teacheth to cry up theſe in a wrong ſpirit and judgment, and after a wrong manner, to undermine,

dermine, betray, and lead the heart from that ſecretly, which openly it would never hear any thing againſt. Now thoſe that are thus deceived, are exceedingly to be pitied, and their deliverance from their entanglements and captivities to be breathed after, and waited for. For I may ſay, in truth and upright ſenſe of heart, there are many that look towards Sion, who yet are ignorant of the devices and ſleights of Satan, to entangle them in their way; and ſome are caught in his ſnares, (like fooliſh birds catching at the chaff, which makes the bigger ſhew, inſtead of the wheat) loſing the ſubſtance for a ſhadow; the life and power in the heart, for a notion and conceit in the brain. And theſe are wiſe in their own eyes, ſo that indeed it is very hard to reach or recover them; yea, much harder than it was at firſt, becauſe they are become more rooted and ſettled in the wrong ground (yea, in a worſe earth) than they were when they were firſt reached to by the power of truth. Yet over theſe there is a deep lamentation, and for theſe a ſore travel, which the Lord God bleſs and proſper, for their recovery unto that from which through miſtake they have erred.

Object. 4. *If any man hath received a gift of miniſtry, he hath received it of the Lord; and its end being to gather to the Lord, they that by it are gathered, are to be delivered up to the Lord, that he (as King, Prieſt, and Prophet) may govern, &c.*

Anſ. The end of the miniſtry is not only to gather, but alſo to preſerve and build up what is gathered, even to perfection. And the ſoul being (eſpecially at firſt, if not for a long time) weak and babiſh, not ſo fully acquainted with the meaſure of life) having had but ſome touches and demonſtrations of it, but not being gathered fully into it, nor rooted and ſettled in it); I ſay, the ſoul, in this ſtate, hath as much need of the miniſtry to preſerve, direct, and watch over it in the truth, as to gather it out of the world. Therefore the Father, in his tender mercy and love, hath appointed thoſe who are grown in his life (and

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in the power and authority of his Spirit) to overſee, watch over, inſtruct, and take care of the flock, ſo as they may give to him an account of their ſouls; and in their care, diligence, and faithfulneſs, they are owned and bleſſed of the Lord; and the other in their holy fear, reverence, and ſubjection. Now this is right order from God, wherein the ſafety of the flock conſiſts; but out of this is danger and confuſion, which the meaſure of life teacheth to avoid.

Object. 5. *But in a caſe of doubt or difference, which ſhall be the judge; the meaſure of life within, or the teſtimony of others without? Shall I judge as I feel the thing in the meaſure of my own life? Or ſhall I ſubmit to others againſt my own ſenſe and judgment, becauſe I have an eſteem of them, as being much above me in the growth, ſenſe, and underſtanding of truth?*

Anſ. It is a great matter to judge aright, and to diſcern and know the meaſure of truth (the voice, motion, and judgment thereof) from all the enemy's falſe appearances, and from all the deceits of the heart. This is moſt certain; Jeruſalem (the heavenly building, the church of the firſt-born) is at unity with itſelf. Truth is pure, eternal, unchangeable, always the ſame; the ſame in every member, in every veſſel, throughout the whole body.

And this I may ſay concerning its appearance in this our age, Was ever the like unity known and brought forth ſince the days of the apoſtles? How hath the Spirit been One, the demonſtration and teſtimony of truth One, the doctrine One, the converſation and practices One in us all! Why, or how ſo? Becauſe we have had our begetting, birth, and teaching from the ſame life, the ſame Spirit; (the ſame fountain ſpringing up, and opening in us all, that have been gathered into its nature and power). Now from this fountain, from this ſpring of life, never iſſueth any thing that is contrary to the life in any. Therefore if there appear a contrariety, there muſt be a waiting to feel who is erred from, or at leaſt not yet fully gathered into, the meaſure of life. And ſuch as are of

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an inferior ſtature and growth in the body, are (in an eſpecial manner) to watch and wait in ſobriety and fear, till the Lord clear up, and make things manifeſt; and likewiſe in the mean time to take heed of an haſty concluding, according to what riſeth up in the underſtanding or judgment (though with ever ſo great a ſeeming clearneſs and ſatisfaction) as if it muſt needs be of and from the life in the veſſel.

It is not an eaſy matter, in all caſes, clearly and underſtandingly to diſcern the voice of the ſhepherd, the motions of God's Spirit, and certainly to diſtinguiſh the meaſure of life from all other voices, motions, and appearances whatſoever. Through much growth in the truth, through much waiting on the Lord, through much fear and trembling, through much ſobriety and meekneſs, through much exerciſe of the ſenſes, this is at length given and obtained. And yet there is a preſervation in the mean time to that which is lowly and ſubmiſſive, looking up to the Lord continually, and not truſting to its own underſtanding, ſenſe, and judgment. But that which is haſty and confident, and ſo ready to plead for its own ſenſe and judgment, according to the meaſure of life, as it calls it; that is commonly out, entered into the erring ſpirit, pleading and contending for it knows not what, and is very apt to judge and condemn others in that very reſpect, wherein itſelf is moſt juſtly and righteouſly judged and condemned by the Lord, even by his pure life and Spirit in his people.

This then is in my heart to ſay in ſhort to this objection: Let the meaſure of life judge freely in thee at any time concerning any thing, and that judgment will ſtand for ever. But be thou wary, wait on the Lord, that thou mayeſt be ſure thou doſt not miſtake in thy own particular, calling that life which the Lord and his people know to be otherwiſe. For if ſo, thou departeſt from the unity and bond of the Spirit, and from the true ſenſe and judgment, and giveſt deceit an advantage over thee, even to lay a foundation of deſtroying thee. Likewiſe thoſe who are to watch

over thee in the Lord (to lay his truth before thee, to exhort and reprove thee, as occaſion is) that they may give an account of thy ſoul to him, cannot do it with joy and rejoicing in his preſence, but with grief and lamentation of heart; which is not at all profitable, but very unprofitable for thee.

Now for a cloſe: there are ſome conſiderations ſpringing up in my heart concerning unity, which I find drawings here to annex, in true love and tenderneſs, for the uſe and ſervice of others; which are as follow:

1. Unity in the ſpiritual body, which is gathered into and knit together in the pure life, is a moſt natural and comely thing. Yea, it is exceeding lovely to find all that are of the Lord of one heart, of one mind, of one judgment, in one way of practice and order in all things.

2. The Lord is to be waited upon for the bringing forth of this in the body; that as there is a foundation of it laid in all, (the life and ſpring being over all) ſo all may be brought by him into the true and full oneneſs.

3. The Lord is to be acknowledged and praiſed in the bringing of it forth, (ſo far as it is brought forth) and to be waited upon for the further perfecting of it.

4. A watch is to be kept (throughout the whole body, and in every heart) for the preſerving of it, ſo far as it is brought forth, that the enemy, by no device or ſubtilty, cauſe diſunion or difference in any reſpect, wherein there was once a true unity and oneneſs. For the enemy will watch to divide; and if he be not watched againſt, in that which is able to diſcover and keep him out, by ſome device or other he will take his advantage to make a rent (in thoſe that are not watchful) from the pure truth and unity of life in the body. For he that in the leaſt thing rents from the body (in any reſpect or particular which was brought forth by the life) he in that reſpect hearkens to another ſpirit (even the dividing ſpirit) and by its inſtigation

inſtigation rents from the life itſelf, and ſo doth not keep his habitation, nor his unity, with that which abides in its habitation.

Now it is alſo in my heart (for the perfecting of this cloſe) to mention a few things (in the ſame love and tenderneſs) which I have found helpful to me towards the preſerving of me in unity with the body. Perhaps it may pleaſe the Lord to refreſh ſome others by the mention of them, and to make them uſeful and helpful to them alſo.

1. The firſt is, *the pure fear of the Lord.* This poizeth and guardeth the mind, keeping down fleſhly confidence and conceitedneſs, (which is very apt to ſpring up) making it wary and conſiderate either of what it receives or rejects; of what it practiſeth, or forbeareth practiſing; cauſing it to wait much, try much, and conſult much with the Lord, and with his miniſters and people, and preſerves out of that ſuddenneſs and inconſiderateneſs of ſpirit, at which the enemy often enters. For truth is weighty, and will bear trial; and the more it is tried in the balance, the more manifeſt its nature and ways appear: but the enemy's appearances and likeneſſes are not ſo; but their deceit, by a thorough trial, comes to be made manifeſt.

2. The ſecond is, *humility of heart.* This is very precious, and of a preſerving nature. Yea, in this ſtate the Lord helpeth and teacheth; and the ſoul alſo (in this ſtate) is fit to receive the help and teachings of the Lord. That which is lifted up and conceited (ready to juſtify its own way, and condemn even the whole body) is neither fit to be taught by the Lord, nor doth the Lord delight (but rather diſdain) to teach it. And ſo not being taught by him, it muſt needs be liable to err; yea, to hearken to that ſpirit, whoſe voice is more pleaſing and ſuitable to the erring mind than the Lord's voice is.

3. A third great help, which in the tender mercy of the Lord I have had experience of, is *ſobriety of judgment.* Not to value or ſet up mine own judg-

ment, or that which I account the judgment of life in me, above the judgment of others, or that which is indeed life in others. For the Lord hath appeared to others, as well as to me: yea, there are others who are in the growth of his truth, and in the purity and dominion of his life, far beyond me. Now for me to ſet up, or hold forth, a ſenſe or judgment of a thing in oppoſition to them, this is out of the ſobriety which is of the truth. Therefore, in ſuch caſes, I am to retire, and fear before the Lord, and wait upon him for a clear diſcerning and ſenſe of his truth, in the unity and demonſtration of his Spirit with others, who are of him, and ſee him. And this will prevent the rents which the want of this ſobriety may occaſion.

4. The laſt thing which I have now to mention is, *tenderneſs, meekneſs, coolneſs, and ſtillneſs of ſpirit.* I wrap up theſe together, becauſe they are much of a nature, and go much together. Theſe are of an uniting, preſerving nature. He that differs and divides from the body cannot be thus; and he that is thus, cannot rend or divide. This is the pure heavenly wiſdom, which is peaceable and keepeth the peace; but the other wiſdom is rough, ſtiff, hard, clamorous, ready to take offence, ready to give offence; exceeding deep in the juſtification of itſelf, exceeding deep in the condemnation of others; and dares (in this temper) appeal to the Lord, as if it were right in its ways, but wronged by others; as if it did abide in the meaſure of his truth and life, which others have departed from. And how can it be otherwiſe? How can the wrong eye, the wrong ſpirit, the wrong wiſdom, but judge wrong, juſtifying the wrong practices, and condemning the right? But ſuch ſhall find (if they come to the true touchſtone, even the meaſure of life indeed) that they are not in the true tenderneſs, which proceeds from the life, in the true meekneſs and gentleneſs, in the true coolneſs and ſtillneſs; but rather in the reaſonings, noiſes, clamours, and diſturbances, which ariſe from another ſpirit, mind, and nature than that which is of the truth. And in coming back

back from this wiſdom to the *pure wiſdom*, from the pretended meaſure of life to the *true meaſure*, and becoming tender, meek, cool, and ſtill in it, they ſhall there feel their error from the Spirit and power of the Lord, and therein own their condemnation therefore from him; and alſo juſtify them who have abode in the power, and been guided by the Spirit and pure meaſure of life, which is from God, and in God, while they have departed from it. For though the ſpirit of error (wherewith they have been deceived and entangled) hath made them believe that they have faithfully abode in the principle and doctrine of truth, while others have departed; yet that will ſoon vaniſh, as truth comes again to be felt, and heard ſpeak in them, and the meaſure of life to live again in them, and to redeem them afreſh into its holy nature, and pure living ſenſe. And bleſſed is he who is not deceived about truth; but is of the *pure nature*, and in the *pure power* of it; in whom the *true eye* ſees, the *true ear* hears, the *true heart* underſtands; who is of a *right ſpirit*, and walketh *uprightly* before the Lord, and among his people. The bleſſing of the ſeed, the peace, comfort, and joy which is from the Moſt High, ſhall deſcend upon him, fill his veſſel, and continue with him, to the ſatisfying of his heart, and the overflowing of his cup, in the midſt of his brethren, and in the very ſight of his enemies. *The Lord God, of his tender mercy, who is the great Shepherd of the ſheep, watch over, preſerve, and mightily defend all his from all devouring ſpirits, and inward devices and deceits of the enemy; carrying on and perfecting the work of his goodneſs, love, and mercy in them, to his own glorious, eternal, everlaſting praiſe.* Amen.

Written by ISAAC PENINGTON, in Ayleſbury priſon.

SOME

DEEP CONSIDERATIONS

CONCERNING THE

STATE of ISRAEL,

Paſt, Preſent, and To Come.

WITH SOME

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS,

CONCERNING

UNITY.

By ISAAC PENINGTON the Younger.

SOME

DEEP CONSIDERATIONS.

Many deep Conſiderations have been upon my Heart concerning the State of ISRAEL, both paſt, preſent, and to come; ſome of which I find Drawings to communicate; together with ſome QUESTIONS and ANSWERS concerning UNITY.

The Conſiderations concerning Iſrael are theſe which follow:

THE precious living ſtate which my ſoul remembereth to have been about the beginning of the late troubles of this nation, when Iſrael was bent to ſeek after the Lord, and applied their hearts to wait upon him in faſtings, and earneſt ſupplications, wherein my heart hath often had the teſtimony that they were accepted of him, and had many times the ſeal of his preſence and power among them: yea, my heart did truly unite with and enjoy the Lord in what was then given forth, and I can never be drawn to deny the truth and worth of that diſpenſation; though I know it was ſwallowed up by a greater deſolation ſoon following after, and ſince by the breaking forth of a more lively diſpenſation.

2. The over-running of that ſtate by the ſubtilty of the enemy, drawing the minds of the ſimple and upright-hearted from the living feeling, and from the inward

inward power of religion, into the diſputations and contentions about forms of worſhip and church-government, which drew out the reaſoning part, and withdrew the ſpirit of the mind from feeding on its proper nouriſhment; and ſo life decayed in the ſpirit, while wiſdom, and knowledge, and ſubtilty increaſed in the underſtanding. And ſo the upright-hearted, miſſing of life where before they had found it, were ſcattered up and down to ſeek after it; and thoſe who abode where they were, grew dry, barren, and contentious; loſing the ſavour, ſweetneſs, meekneſs, love, and indeed whatever was living and precious, and remained fixing their minds on that which the Lord had departed from. Oh! the darkneſs and miſery of this ſtate! Oh! the pain of the hearts where life was ſtirring, for want of the living God! Oh! the death and formality of thoſe that were dead and formal! Surely, had not the Lord pitied his people in this ſtate, and appeared to them in his life and power, (which this great deſolation made way for) it had been determined concerning Iſrael for ever: for death had overgrown the generality, and life was even gaſping and expiring in the ſingle-hearted.

3. The precious breaking forth of the Lord (at this diſmal time, in this hour of diſtreſs and deſperate condition of Iſrael) in ſome hidden veſſels, whom he had kept waiting upon him, and whom he had preſerved freſh in the ſenſe of him; to whom his appearance was very glorious, to whom he opened the ſtate of the earth, and the ſtate of his people, giving them the everlaſting goſpel to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, and promiſing them that his Spirit and power ſhould go along with them, bidding them go forth to till and dreſs the earth, and to gather his people into his fold. And who can utter what the glory of this light was, in its ſhining and breaking forth in their hearts! How welcome to their weary ſouls, how pleaſant to the eye of their ſpirits, how demonſtrative and ſatisfactory to their hearts! Oh! the joy of that day (ſurely it can never be forgotten by

by them) wherein they ſenſibly felt the pouring down of the Spirit of life upon them, and their hearts gathered into the boſom of eternal reſt, and their ſouls and bodies ſanctified, and ſet apart for the Lord, and his ſervice.

4. The contemptible means God put into their hands to work this work by; which was not by preaching any new thing, but by directing to a principle which God had already hid in the earth of every man's heart, and which was to be known by its divine nature and light, turning againſt and reproving ſin; teſtifying that this was the way the Lord of heaven and earth had choſen, to bring his ſons and daughters into the power and glory of his life. Oh! what heart can receive this, what eye can ſee any beauty in this, but that which the Lord toucheth and openeth! I teſtify (in the ſenſe of life) that the wiſdom of man, yea, the wiſdom of Iſrael corrupted, cannot but deſpiſe and turn from this. Is not this the loweſt of all diſpenſations? Is not this common to all mankind? Doth not this fall ſhort (in itſelf, as I may ſay, and as it hath formerly been diſpenſed) of the diſpenſation of the law of Moſes to the Jews, much more of the diſpenſation by Chriſt and his apoſtles? Who would have looked for the Lord here! And yet this hath the Lord choſen to gather his people by, and to appear to the world in; and hath gathered the life, virtue, and ſubſtance of all former diſpenſations into it, as thoſe who are gathered thereby, and have waited upon him therein, and felt the nature and power of his life, (and ſeen things paſt, preſent, and to come) are living witneſſes of, againſt all the gainſayings, thoughts, and reaſonings of fleſh and blood.

5. The contemptibleneſs of the veſſels, which the Lord choſe to fill with this treaſure, and to let forth this diſpenſation of his life through. They were for the moſt part mean, as to the outward; young country lads, of no deep underſtanding, or ready expreſſion, but very fit to be deſpiſed every where by the wiſdom of man, and only to be owned in the power of that life

life wherein they came forth. How ridiculous was their manner of coming forth and appearance to the eye of man! About what poor trivial circumſtances, habits, geſtures, and things, did they ſeem to lay great weight, and make great matters of moment! How far did they ſeem from being acquainted with the myſteries and depths of religion! But their chief preaching was *repentance, and about a light within, and of turning to that, and proclaiming the great and terrible day of the Lord to be at hand*; wherein I confeſs my heart exceedingly deſpiſed them, and cannot wonder that any wiſe man, or ſort of profeſſors, did, or do yet, deſpiſe them. Yea, they themſelves were very ſenſible of their own weakneſs, and unfitneſs for that great work and ſervice wherewith the Lord had honoured them, and of their inability to reaſon with man; and ſo (in the fear and in the watch of their ſpirits) kept cloſe to their teſtimony, and to the movings of his power, not mattering to anſwer or ſatisfy the reaſoning part of man, but ſingly minding the reaching to, and raiſing of, that to which their teſtimony was.

6. The bleſſing that God gave to this his diſpenſation of life in their hands. Oh! how did the Lord proſper them in gathering his ſcattered wandering ſheep into his fold of reſt! How did their words drop down like dew, and refreſh the hungry thirſty ſouls! How did they reach to the life in thoſe to whom they miniſtered, raiſing up that which lay dead in the grave, to give a living teſtimony to the living voice of God in them! How did they batter the wiſdom and reaſonings of man, making the loftineſs thereof ſtoop and bow to the weak and fooliſh babe of the begettings of life! Eye hath not ſeen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what the power of life hath wrought, through them, in the hearts and conſciences of thoſe, who have longed after, and waited for, the Lord. Oh! the breathings and meltings of ſoul, the ſenſe of the living preſence of God, the ſubjecting of the heart unto

unto the Lord, the awakening of and giving ſtrength unto his witneſs, the falling down and weakening of the powers of darkneſs, the clear ſhining of the light of life in the heart, and the ſweet running of the pure ſtreams thereof into the enlivened ſouls, which hath often been known and ſealed to from the powerful appearance of God in their miniſtry! Indeed when I have conſidered theſe and ſuch like things in my heart, and narrowly marked them in my converſe with them, I have been often forced to cry out concerning them, *Truly here is man very weak and contemptible; but God very glorious and powerful.* And indeed, when at any time I looked on the man, I was hardly able to forbear diſdaining them; but, on the other hand, when the eye of my ſpirit beheld the power and glory of the Lord in them, I could hardly forbear over-eſteeming and exalting them.

7. The glory which the Lord advanced theſe veſſels to, ſince his beginning to make uſe of them. How hath he enriched them with gifts and abilities, and every way fitted them for the ſervice and employment he hath had for them! How hath he enlarged their miniſtry, that they who had very little to ſay, either by way of declaration or diſputation at firſt, now abound with ſtrength, and abundantly ſurpaſs the knowledge and wiſdom both of the world, and of other profeſſors of religion! The Lord indeed hath adorned them, putting his beauty upon them, and cauſing them to grow up in his ſtrength and in his wiſdom. This mine eye hath ſeen, and often took notice of, bleſſing the name of the Lord, and praying to him for their preſervation. And ſurely whoever he be, that hath either known himſelf, or heard the relation of the poverty of theſe young ſtriplings, when they firſt came forth in the power of the Lord, how empty in themſelves they then were, how ſenſibly they went up and down of their own weakneſs, how little they had to ſay to people that came to obſerve them and inquire of them, how afraid they were to be drawn from their watch, at what a diſtance they ſtood from

from entering into reaſoning about things; I ſay, he that did know, and doth conſider this, and ſhall alſo behold how the Lord hath advanced them ſince, making them mighty and honourable with his gifts and abilities, (with the beauty whereof the very man flouriſheth to the ſight of every eye that is in any meaſure truly open) cannot but acknowledge the change to be wonderful.

8. I have had the ſenſe and conſideration of this alſo in my heart, that their danger is now greater than when they were poorer, weaker, and not ſo enriched and gifted by the Lord. The enemy is very ſubtil and watchful, and there is danger to Iſrael all along, both in the poverty and in the riches; but the greater danger is in the riches: becauſe then man is apt to forget God, and to loſe ſomewhat of the ſenſe of his dependence, (which keeps the ſoul low and ſafe in the life) and alſo to ſuffer ſomewhat of exaltation to creep upon him, which preſently in a degree corrupts and betrays him. *The heart that is in any meaſure lifted up in itſelf, ſo far it is not upright in the Lord.* Let every one feel this, waiting to be preſerved, and praying for thoſe who are moſt beautified by gifts and abilities from the life, becauſe in this reſpect (and at this time) their danger is greateſt. When Iſrael is poor, low, weak, trembling, ſeeing no lovelineſs nor worthineſs in himſelf, but depending upon the mere mercy and tender bowels of the Lord in the free covenant of his love, &c. then is Iſrael ſafe. But when he hath a being given him in the life, and is richly adorned with the ornaments of life, and comes to have the power itſelf in his hand to make uſe of, then is he in more danger of being ſomewhat of himſelf, and of forgetting him that formed him, (being apt to make uſe of his gifts without ſuch an immediate ſenſe of the giver as he had in his trembling and weak eſtate) and ſo of departing out of that humble, tender, abaſed, contrite ſtate, and temper of ſpirit, wherein he was ſtill preſerved.

9. This

9. This alſo hath been manifeſt to me, and deeply impreſſed on my ſpirit all along, that the Lord may, if he ſee good, ſuffer ſome great and eminent ones to fall in Iſrael. Man may forget himſelf, and the Lord may let out temptation upon him, and ſuffer it to enter, that he may bring him to the ſenſe and feeling of his weakneſs again. Yea, thoſe who have felt the power of the Lord in and through an inſtrument, may give more to the inſtrument than belongs unto it, and ſo put the Lord upon recovering the honour due to him, which is miſplaced and miſapplied to that which is but his inſtrument. This is the Lord's day, (the light thereof is his, the life his, the power his) and the glory thereof will he not give to another. If therefore any man, in this day, ſhall take to himſelf what belongs to the Lord, or any other ſhall give it him, the Lord will not ſo loſe it, but will find out a way to recover his own. And happy is the man who lieth continually perfectly abaſed before the Lord, aſſuming nothing of the Lord's to himſelf, nor attributing any thing of the Lord's to another, that the Lord alone may be exalted every where. And let all gifts ſerve the ſeed, and its riſing over all gifts be waited for, that the life every where may have its due, being lifted up over all.

10. I have had a deep ſenſe of this alſo, that if the Lord ſhould ſuffer ſuch a thing to fall out among us, it may cauſe a great ſhaking and ſcattering in Iſrael. Surely I may ſay, it would come very unexpectedly and unſuſpectedly to many; and ſo ſuch perſons would be ſurpriſed with it, and not at all prepared for it. Alas! who could ſuſpect (feeling perſons ſo eminent in the power, and ſo exerciſed and ſkilful in the way and paths of righteouſneſs, and ſo able to inſtruct others therein) that they could poſſibly fall in any degree from the truth and power of life! And yet they are not free from temptation: and if they be confident of their own ſtrength, and forget the tender hand of the Lord, he may ſuffer a temptation to enter them, which preſently begets a ground for

for evil weeds to ſpring up in, and for blindneſs, and hardneſs, and error from the pure power, to creep in at.

O dear friends! who know the precioufneſs of life, and deſire the preſervation of the Lord in your ſeveral conditions, let us fear the Lord, and his goodneſs to us, remembering what a low ebb we were at when the Lord viſited us, and how freely he viſited, and how freely he daily preſerveth, that we may not be hardened or lifted up againſt the world, or againſt any ſort of profeſſors; but may magnify the grace which hath made and keepeth up the difference between us and them, praying to the Lord for them, and watching for the hour of his mercy to them, exerciſing all manner of ſweetneſs, and meekneſs, and long-ſuffering towards them in the mean time; alſo pitying and bearing with all the tempted ones among ourſelves, as ſuch who are ſenſible that we alſo may be tempted, and that underſtand the ground why we fall not by the temptation.

What ſhall I ſay more? There are three *Queries* appearing in my view, in relation to this thing, which the hearts of ſome may deſire ſatisfaction about; to which I find ſomewhat, in way of anſwer, ſpringing up in me.

Query 1. *How may a man, whom the Lord hath exalted by gifts and ſervices to him, be preſerved from falling?*

Anſ. 1. There is that which waiteth to preſerve, and is ſtill ſtretching forth its hand, to keep to itſelf that which it hath gathered; which being hearkened and yielded unto in its diſcoveries and warnings, will not fail to deliver the ſoul from the danger and ſnares of every condition.

2. There is the free mercy and love of the covenant, wherein the ſoul may find help and pity, although it ſhould be ſomewhat tainted and entangled with the ſnares of the enemy.

3. There is a proper frame or ſtate of ſpirit; to wit, of humility and brokenneſs, which is fit for Iſ-

rael

rael in every condition; but more eſpecially when he is exalted in the dominion and power of life, and honoured with great gifts and ſervices for the Lord. In this Iſrael is ſafe: and happy is he who is not ſuffered to abide in any degree of exaltation of ſpirit; but is brought down again (through the tender mercy and love of the Lord) into this, though by the buffetings of Satan.

Query 2. *How may the little ones, if the Lord ſhould ſuffer one or more (of ſuch as have been very eminent in his ſervice) to decline and fall, how may they be preſerved from falling with him or them?*

Anſ. Keeping to the meaſure of life in the particular, and not valuing others by an apprehenſion concerning them; but only knowing and honouring them as they are felt and diſcerned in the life: this will preſerve every particular (that is thus ordered) from being tainted with any of their ſnares or deviations. *O Iſrael! O little babes! know no man after the fleſh; but the Lord alone in his living Spirit.* For man is but a veſſel, wherein the life may appear or diſappear at pleaſure; and the Lord is not engaged to make uſe of man in his ſervice, further than he ſeeth good. The Lord may appear where he hath never appeared before, and he may not appear where he hath hitherto appeared very frequently and powerfully. Oh! know the life in thine own heart, that is to be the judge in thee concerning the appearances of life in others. If that judge not, be ſtill and ſilent in thy heart, waiting for its judgment: when that judgeth, let all thy thoughts and reaſonings be bowed down under it. Let man have no more than his due, while the Lord pleaſeth to make uſe of him; and to ſuch there will accrue no great ſhaking or damage, when the Lord layeth aſide any of his own inſtruments. But if any thing but the life judge, it will ſtill either be ſetting up, or throwing down, man: whereby there will come loſs on either hand in the iſſue, to all ſuch who thus act.

Query 3. *How may any ſuch, as have fallen from an high and glorious ſtate in the power and dominion of life, be again recovered?*

Anſ. Indeed this is a very difficult thing: not becauſe the mercy and power of the Lord is at a loſs to or concerning man in this ſtate; but becauſe this condition ſets a man's ſpirit at ſo great a diſtance from the uſe of that remedy which the Lord hath appointed for man's recovery. It is very hard to bring ſuch an one to a ſenſe of his loſs (whereby the depth of his fall might be prevented) until he be gone very far; and the farther he goes in his declining from the life, the harder will his recovery be. Again; it is hard for ſuch an one to become ſo poor, and lie ſo low and ſo long at the foot of God's grace, as alſo to be contented to be ſo laid aſide and not made uſe of, as the Spirit of the Lord may judge neceſſary for him, to bring him into a perfect abaſement of ſpirit, and to work that perfectly out of him whereby the enemy now entered to betray him: yea, the judgment of the Lord (the righteous and ſevere judgment of the Lord) is hard to be borne in this ſtate; and it is much if ſuch a veſſel do not break here, in its new forming on the wheel. Yet that which boweth before the Lord, being willing to be ſmitten and abaſed by him, and to lie under his correction and judgment his ſeaſon, even until he ſay it is enough, the Lord will without doubt reſtore into his favour, if not alſo into the honour of his ſervice again.

Object. *But ſome tender heart may ſay (which feeleth many weakneſſes, much unbelief, and the danger of falling daily) If this be true, oh! what will become of me! If ſuch as theſe be liable to fall, and to fall ſo dangerouſly, how ſhall I ſtand! I was wounded enough before with the ſenſe of my own condition; but this affrighteth me much more.*

Anſ. O tender heart! the enemy may make uſe of this to trouble and afflict thee! but it was not ſo intended by the Lord, who is very full of unutterable bowels, and who hath a day of bowels for thy ſtate; yea,

yea, his day, which hath already dawned, is ſo dawning as to reach thee. The Lord hath not yet done gathering his ſcattered ſheep, nor yet ſhewn the utmoſt ſkill he hath, either to gather, or to preſerve; and the ſtate of the weakeſt, under the preſerving power of the Lord, is ſafe. Great are the diſeaſes of Iſrael; great is yet the loſs of ſcattered ſouls, which as yet know not the call of the Shepherd; and if at any time they do feel a touch thereof, are eaſily reaſoned again out of it, and driven back by the thoughts of their own hearts. Oh! great, great alſo is the ſkill of the Shepherd, and his hand very tender, which the Lord is putting forth for the help of theſe; bleſſed be his name. And as the condition of theſe needs and requires that from the nature and ſoul of the Lord, which the conditions of others do not require; ſo the nature of the Lord hath mercy and love in it to anſwer their ſtates, and will give it out in his day and ſeaſon. Oh! let none be offended thereat. Let no eye throughout all Iſrael be evil, becauſe the Lord is exceeding good. If he pleaſe to kill the fatted calf, and ſet it before his prodigal ſon, let none that have walked faithfully with him in any diſpenſation be offended thereat: but rather let all (in whom is life) ſtand ready to ſhout at the iſſuings forth of love and mercy, in the varieties of the diſpenſations thereof, according to the need and capacity of every ſort of veſſels, prepared by the Lord to receive it. Therefore, *O thou afflicted! toſſed with tempeſts, and not comforted*; thou ſhalt know and feel this from the Lord, that he knoweth how to bring home his conſolations to thy ſoul, and to caſt thee into the mould of his life, and bring thee forth in the power of his righteouſneſs; and that he needeth not to find any worthineſs or righteouſneſs in thee; for he can create and make room for it in thy heart; yea, he can begin, carry on, and perfect his work in thee, for his own name's ſake. And to thee, O broken ſoul! I cannot ſo much ſay, *do this, or believe this*; *but rather, the Lord will work in thee*; *yea, the Lord will quicken faith in thee, and raiſe*

up his own nature from the ſeed of his own life, which he himſelf hath ſown in thy inward parts, and will not fail to preſerve.

Beſides, this broken ſtate of thine (wherein the vileneſs and weakneſs of ſelf is daily felt, with the exceeding great need of the Lord's preſerving power and mercy) is a ſafe ſtate; towards which, that which (alone) preſerveth, is continually iſſuing forth in the bowels of his tenderneſs. And though thou doſt not ſee the love of the Lord, and his tender care over thee (and ſo wanteſt the comfort of thine own condition); yet it is never a whit the leſs in the heart and Spirit of the Lord towards thee; and in divers reſpects I may ſay, it is better for thee at preſent to want the ſight of it. I am ſatisfied in my heart concerning the nature and ways of the Lord, and I know there is that mercy in him which my ſoul crieth for; and that it is not only treaſured up, but about to be iſſued forth towards thoſe for whoſe ſakes the cry is unto him for it. *The Lord will ariſe, and have mercy upon Sion, even upon the mourners and diſtreſſed-ones in Sion; he will ſay to them who are of a fearful heart, and mourn bitterly becauſe of their unbelief* (finding themſelves as unable to believe now for righteouſneſs, as ever the Jews were to work for it); *be ſtrong; ſtand ſtill; wait on me your God; behold, my righteouſneſs is ready to be revealed, and I am bringing that faith with me which ye want, to give your ſouls the entrance into my promiſes, and into my divine nature promiſed. Ye are my lambs, and my boſom is for you, and thither will I gather you; yea, ye have already conceived, and are with young, though ye know it not; and I will lead you on gently in a way that ye cannot, nor never ſhall, know, as ye would know it; but ſhall not want or miſs of that knowledge thereof, that I ſee good for you. I will beget a deeper life in you, and bring it forth after a deeper way of diſpenſation than ye have yet been acquainted with, or than your underſtandings can comprehend; but in the death which I am bringing upon you, and in the travailing pangs which ye ſhall feel in your hearts, ſhall it ſpring up in you and be brought forth.* O dear lambs! mind

mind the quickenings of life, and the ſavour and ſenſe which the Lord begets in the heart, and let the outward knowledge (even of what ye have had experience) go, but as the Lord quickens it; and mind not the noiſes of thoughts and reaſonings about things, which the ſoul's enemy will be ſtriving to fill you with, and batter you by; but ſink down from theſe, and wait to feel that which lies beneath them; in the free nature, life, virtue, power, and motions whereof alone is your ſoul's ſalvation; and if ye cannot receive the ſenſe of this direction at preſent, wait on the Lord either for it, or for what other manifeſtation or tender help he ſhall pleaſe to give forth unto you.

SOME QUESTIONS and ANSWERS, CONCERNING SPIRITUAL UNITY.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is ſpiritual unity?*

Anſ. The meeting of the ſame ſpiritual nature in divers, in one and the ſame ſpiritual center or ſtreams of life. When the ſpirits or ſouls of creatures are begotten by one power into one life, and meet in heart there; ſo far as they thus meet, there is true unity among them.

Queſt. 2. *Wherein doth this unity conſiſt?*

Anſ. In the life, in the nature, in the Spirit wherein they are all begotten, and of which they are formed, and where their meeting is. It conſiſts not in any outward or inward thing of an inferior nature; but only keeps within the limits and bounds of the ſame

nature. The doing the ſame thing, the thinking the ſame thing, the ſpeaking the ſame thing, this doth not unite here in this ſtate, in this nature; but only the doing, or thinking, or ſpeaking of it in the ſame life. Yea, though the doings, or thoughts, or words be divers; yet if they proceed from the ſame principle and nature, there is a true unity felt therein, where the life alone is judge.

Queſt. 3. *How is the unity preſerved?*

Anſ. Only by abiding in the life; only by keeping to the power, and in the principle, from whence the unity ſprang, and in which it ſtands. Here is a knitting of natures, and a fellowſhip in the ſame ſpiritual center. Here the divers and different motions of ſeveral members in the body (thus coming from the life and Spirit of the body) are known to, and owned by, the ſame life, where it is freſh and ſenſible. It is not keeping up an outward knowledge (or belief concerning things) that unites, nor keeping up an outward conformity in actions, &c. for theſe may be held and done by another part in man, and in another nature; but it is by keeping and acting in that which did at firſt unite. In this there is neither matter nor room for diviſion; and he that is within theſe limits, cannot but be found in the oneneſs.

Queſt. 4. *How is the unity interrupted?*

Anſ. By the interpoſition of any thing of a different nature or ſpirit from the life. When any thing of the earthly or ſenſual part comes between the ſoul and the life, this interrupts the ſoul's unity with the life itſelf; and it alſo interrupts its unity with the life in others, and the unity of the life in others with it. Any thing of the man's ſpirit, of the man's wiſdom, of the man's will, not bowed down and brought into ſubjection, and ſo not coming forth in and under the authority and guidance of life, in this is ſomewhat of the nature of diviſion: yea, the very knowledge of truth, and holding of it forth by the man's wiſdom, and in his will, out of the movings and power of the life, brings a damp upon the life, and interrupts the unity; for

for the life in others cannot unite with this in ſpirit, though it may own the words to be true.

Queſt. 5. *How may unity be recovered, if at any time decaying?*

Anſ. In the Lord alone is the recovery of Iſrael, from any degree of loſs in any kind, at any time; who alone can teach to retire into, and to be found in that wherein the unity is and ſtands, and into which diviſion cannot enter. This is the way of reſtoring unity to Iſrael, upon the ſenſe of any want thereof; even every one, through the Lord's help, retiring, (in his own particular) and furthering the retirings of others to the principle of life, that every one there may feel the waſhing from what hath in any meaſure corrupted, and the new-begetting into the power of life. From this the true and laſting unity will ſpring amain, to the gladding of all hearts that know the ſweetneſs of it, and who cannot but naturally and moſt earneſtly deſire it. Oh! mark therefore! the way is not by ſtriving to beget into one and the ſame apprehenſion concerning things, nor by endeavouring to bring into one and the ſame practices; but by alluring and drawing into that wherein the unity conſiſts, and which brings it forth in the veſſels, which are ſeaſoned therewith and ordered thereby. And from this let all wait for the daily new and living knowledge, and for the ordering of their converſations and practices in that light, (and drawings thereof) and in that ſimplicity and integrity of heart which the Spirit of life at preſent holdeth forth and worketh in them; and the life will be felt, and the name of the Lord praiſed in all the tents of Jacob, and through all the inhabitants of his Iſrael; and there will be but *one heart, and one ſoul, and one ſpirit, and one mind, and one way and power of life*; and what is already wrought in every heart, the Lord will be acknowledged in, and his name praiſed; and the Lord's ſeaſon contentedly waited for his filling up of what is wanting any where. *So the living God (the God of Iſrael, the God of everlaſting tender bowels and compaſſions to Iſrael) fill the veſſels*

of his heritage with his life, and cauſe the peace and love of his holy nature and Spirit to deſcend upon their dwellings, and to ſpring up powerfully in them towards his living truth, and towards one another.

And let all ſtrive to excel in tenderneſs, and in long-ſuffering, and to be kept out of hard and evil thoughts one of another, and from harſh interpretations concerning any thing relating to one another. Oh! this is unworthy to be found in an Iſraelite towards an Egyptian; but exceeding ſhameful and inexcuſable to be found in one brother towards another. How many weakneſſes doth the Lord paſs by in us! How ready is he to interpret every thing well concerning his diſciples, that may bear a good interpretation! "The ſpirit," ſaith he, "is willing; but the "fleſh is weak." When they had been all ſcattered from him upon his death, he did not afterwards upbraid them; but ſweetly gathered them again. O dear friends! have we received the ſame life of ſweetneſs? Let us bring forth the ſame ſweet fruits, being ready to excuſe, and to receive what may tend towards the excuſe of another in any doubtful caſe; and where there is any evil manifeſt, wait, Oh! wait, to overcome it with good. Oh! let us not ſpend the ſtrength of our ſpirits in crying out of one another becauſe of evil; but watch and wait where the mercy and the healing virtue will pleaſe to ariſe. *O Lord, my God, when thou haſt ſhewn the wants of Iſrael in any kind ſufficiently (whether in the particular, or in the general) bring forth the ſupply thereof from thy fulneſs, ſo ordering it in thine eternal wiſdom, that all may be aſhamed and abaſed before thee, and thy name praiſed in and over all.*

ISAAC PENINGTON.

CON-

CONCERNING

GOD's ſeeking out HIS ISRAEL:

LIKEWISE CONCERNING

The PRINCIPLE of LIFE,

Whereby He ſeeketh them;

AND THE

WAY of their cloſing with His SPIRIT therein.

AS ALSO CONCERNING

The TWO COVENANTS;

Under One whereof

He pleaſeth to Exerciſe and Prepare them for the Life and Inheritance, which he hath Treaſured up for them in the Other.

WITH

A POSTSCRIPT, relating ſome Things neceſſary for Loſt MAN to be acquainted with, in his Travels from his Loſt Eſtate.

By ISAAC PENINGTON.

To ſuch in Godmancheſter, and thereabouts, who bear the reproachful Name of QUAKERS; whoſe Religion began in the Power, and who ſtill abide and walk on in the Power, waiting to be perfected in the full Manifeſtation and Appearance thereof.

Dear Friends in God's pure Eternal Truth,

IT was my lot once to be among you in a meeting, together with a certain friend, where I had a word unto you from the Lord, while the ſaid friend was declaring. But being exceedingly bowed down in ſpirit, and afraid to interrupt the ſervice in him, (whom I looked upon as far more abundantly grown up in the life, and fitter to miniſter from the life) I waited till the life in him ſhould ſtop. But then thoſe words, which had often ſprung in me before, ſprung not again; and I durſt not then ſpeak them from a bare remembrance of them, not finding the Spirit of the Lord then giving them me to ſpeak. So I went away with a burthen on my own ſoul, and alſo with a ſenſe of ſome loſs to you of ſome part of the good which the Lord intended you. Since that time, I have often remembered the thing with grief; crying to the Lord, that that which hath ſo often ſtopped the life in me, and my ſervice in the life, might in his good time be removed; and that the day might come, wherein the man might never more be or appear, as of himſelf, or as a determiner concerning the things which flow from the life, but that the life might have its free courſe and current through me, in its own pure ſtreamings, to the delighting of my own heart in the Lord, and the refreſhing of others. And indeed this day I exceedingly long for,

ſor, that nothing of ſelf might be left to be brought forth, and that all which is of the life might ſpring up and flouriſh, both in me and every where.

Now one morning, as my heart was breathing towards the Lord, not having a thought either of you or this thing, the very ſame words which were given me in that meeting, ſprang up again livingly in me, with a pointing to write them down, with what the Lord ſhould pleaſe to give in further, and ſend them to you, together with a paper, which was a little before written, concerning the two covenants. And when I had almoſt finiſhed what was then given me to write, I was further directed to annex to the firſt paper another concerning the principle.

How the Lord ſhall pleaſe to improve them to your advantage, or to the advantage of any others, I leave to him; it being the earneſt deſire of my heart, that his work may proſper in his hand, and that the light and power which iſſueth forth from him for the ſalvation of ſouls, may be effectual thereunto; and that nothing of love, of mercy, of goodneſs, of life, of ſalvation, of his ſearching and healing virtue may be held back by him, which the ſtate or condition of any of his ſheep or lambs (whether loſt or gathered) calleth for. That his Iſrael may become the glory of the earth, and all nations may be refreſhed with beholding the beauty, and taſting the ſweetneſs, of life and righteouſneſs, which ſhall aſſuredly flow forth from his ſanctuary. And ſurely the time is not far off (whatever the eye of ſenſe may judge, and however things may appear to man's underſtanding) wherein Iſrael ſhall be no more compelled to worſhip in the temples of mens building and dedicating; but ſhall in the beauty of holineſs. For the day is come (yea, the bleſſed day is come) wherein the Lord God of life will build up his Sion, and appear there in his glory; Amen, Hallelujah.

CON-

CONCERNING

God's ſeeking out His Israel.

THIS is the word which was given to me; *The Shepherd of Iſrael is ſeeking out his ſheep, even the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael.* Concerning which, theſe three Queſtions ſprang up in me one after another, as I was about to write, and writing.

Queſt. 1. *Who are his ſheep?*

Anſ. His ſheep are the ſons of men; the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael are thoſe among the ſons of men, who have felt touches of his life, begettings into his nature, and were in ſome meaſure gathered into ſome appearance and diſpenſation of his life by his Holy Spirit; wherein they felt warmth from God in their ſpirits, and a delight and joy in what they felt, and a longing after a further manifeſtation of him. Theſe were his ſheep, in a gathered eſtate in ſome degree, by thoſe diſpenſations of life in the darkneſs, which had ſome ſtrength in them to gather from under the darkneſs, and did gather into that meaſure of light and life that was then diſpenſed. But the ſheep cleaving to the diſpenſations, (which were very weak and imperfect, and had little of Spirit, but very much of fleſh in them) and not following the Lamb out of them into the further diſpenſations of life, into which he ſtood ready to lead; the Lord brake them in pieces, departed from them, and left the life to be made a prey of, and brought under the captivity of death; ſo that the ſheep were ſcattered upon the mountains, and every beaſt of prey was ready to faſten his teeth on them

them and devour them. Oh! the precious buddings forth of the virtue and power of God, that were to be found in the ſeveral ſorts of profeſſors, while they ſought the Lord only, and the knowledge of one another in the breathing ſpirit, and minded not the outward form, but the feeling of life in their duties and ordinances!

But when they began to mind the form, and cry up ſeveral forms; the Lord alſo began to lothe the forms, and did not give forth that among them, which formerly they met with, but took away the kernel, and left them the ſhell: and oh! how dry and barren have they become ſince! Where is the feeling of life? Where is the love to one another in the living ſenſe? Where is the zeal after, and earneſt ſeeking of, the power of religion? Where is the nature of the ſheep to be found in them? And where is the preſence of the Shepherd among them? Are they not *loſt ſheep* indeed? Loſt to God? Loſt to themſelves? Have they not loſt the *holy, pure, ſweet, meek, heavenly, tender, gentle nature of the ſheep?* Have they not loſt the *paſture and the fold,* whereon they were wont to feed, and wherein they were wont to lie down ſafe? Have they not loſt the *preſerver of their ſouls* from the devouring ſpirit? Nay, have they not loſt the very *ſeed of life,* which the good huſbandman did ſow in them? And do not evil ſeeds ſhoot up in the ſtead thereof, to the poiſoning of their hearts and blemiſhing of their converſations? And are not ſome of them inſenſible of their loſs, and lie ſtill drowned in their forms, thinking to confine the appearance of the free life and unlimited Spirit there? Others of them ſick, and deeply wounded and languiſhing, not knowing where to meet with the good Shepherd, nor how to make ſhift without him? Oh! the cries of the deſolate and mourning ſouls, which love God at their hearts, and have the relicks of his nature left in them in a ſeed ſtill; which he once begot and brought forth in ſome freſhneſs! Oh! their deep anguiſh! their miſerable loſt condition for want of meeting with the Phyſician; their pantings,

ings, their tears, their diſtreſſes, their roarings out, their overwhelmings, their ſeveral kinds of captivities, and the cruelties exerciſed upon their ſpirits by the captiver, even break my heart, that I am almoſt overwhelmed in the ſenſe of their miſery! But my heart is ſomewhat comforted with the freſhneſs of this teſtimony, which hath often riſen up in the immediate life of God in my heart; and I have heard his voice ſpeaking it, even that *he will ſeek them out.* And I know he hath the ſkill to find them, in their ſeveral mourning holes, wherein they lie hid; and the pits whereinto they are tumbled; and the briars and thorns of the wilderneſs, wherewith they are torn, and wherein they are twiſted and entangled, and held pining to death; and in the priſons, and chains, and fetters of their ſpirits, wherein they are cloſed up and bound down by the enemy of their ſouls.

Queſt. 2. *How will he ſeek them, and how will he find them out?*

Anſ. By the light of his Spirit ſhining in their hearts, by which he will touch and quicken the ſheep's life, and open the ſheep's ear, and perſuade the heart to know and believe that it is he that viſiteth in his tender mercy, and that he will have mercy on, and ſhew compaſſion to, that which hath long been caſt off and forſaken; and he will be their God, and they ſhall be his people, even the houſe of Iſrael that had departed from him; and that he had not forgotten them, but waited for the hour of mercy, and for the ſeaſon of the bringing forth of that life and power, whoſe ſearching and healing virtue will reach to the utmoſt extremity of their conditions.

Queſt. 3. *What will he do with them, when he hath ſought after and found them out?*

Anſ. He will gather them into the fold of life, and lead them into the paſtures of life, and feed them with the food of life, as their conditions are able to bear; he will be fitting them by the exerciſes of his Spirit, for their paſſages from death to life; and as they are capable, ſo will he be ſtill tranſlating them from the

one

one into the other. He will bring them from their ſeveral falſe-built ſtates in the land of Egypt, (or Babylon) into a true wilderneſs-ſtate; and there, as he wears out the old nature in them, ſo will he ſpeak comfortably to them, and build up the new, and nouriſh the true Iſraelitiſh babe there with manna from heaven; and after he is grown up to a man's eſtate, and hath received the inward circumciſion, lead him into the pleaſant land, where there are the rich paſtures, and the ſweet ſtill waters, and the precious milk and honey of the living, with which the land flows naturally, and which yields pure nouriſhment to all the living offspring. Oh! my heart is not able to contain the ſenſe of all that God will do for Iſrael, or of what he will be to them, or of what they ſhall be to him, when he hath finiſhed his work upon them, and brought them forth (through the ſtrength of his covenant) in the nature and into the poſſeſſion of his life.

But ſure I am he hath begun his work: the light of the day (even of the everlaſting day) hath ſprung and viſited many; the principle of life hath been revealed in the hearts of many; and many are gathering into it, and find the man ſinking and dying; and the life riſing and living in them day by day. And though the paſſage be bitter, and the paſſover ſtill eaten with bitter herbs, and the devourer often let looſe and ſuffered to nip and deſtroy; yet out of the eater at laſt comes forth meat, and out of the ſtrong one in the iſſue comes forth ſweetneſs. Yea, though there be no faith found to cloſe in with the light, nor any ſtrength left to obey or follow, becauſe of the deep foregoing breakings (wherein both nature and ſpirit were all daſhed in pieces, and ſwallowed up in confuſion); yet the breath of life and the power of the light (in proceſs of exerciſes, and after much deep miſery, and impoſſibilities, to the ſight and judgment of ſenſe) at length raiſeth up a little ſeed in the longing ſoul; which receiveth and bringeth forth, after an hidden way, that which it could not. And here life is indeed

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of grace, and wholly of the ſeed, in this ſtate. Only wait to learn and know in ſpirit (and then take heed of deſpiſing) the weak beginnings and dawnings of light, in the ſecret ſtirrings and movings of the principle of life; and wait alſo for a watch to be ſet up in thee againſt that fleſhly wiſdom and underſtanding, which will be apt to be judging about the work of God in thy heart; for if it prevail ſo far, it will then alſo be begetting in thee deſpiſings of, and turnings from, the low beginnings thereof, and ſo divert thy feet from the path of life. For the prevention whereof, and for the furtherance of thy ſoul, in its cloſing with, and travelling on, in the light and guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, this following paper is added.

Concerning the Seed or inward Principle, whereby Life is begotten and maintained in the Heart.

THE Lord God, who is full of everlaſting bowels of compaſſion towards mankind in general, but more eſpecially towards thoſe, in whom he hath begotten a ſenſe of the want of him, with breathings and deſires after him; hath choſen a ſeed or inward principle of life to appear in, towards the breaking the bonds of their captivity, and the bringing them from under the power and miſery of death.

This, many who have been overwhelmed with miſery, and whoſe ſpirits have melted and failed with the want of the ſenſe of their God, and have felt that life, which was formerly built up in them, broken down and laid waſte; and their communion with God ſwallowed up in the ruins thereof; and their ſouls ready utterly to periſh and be devoured by the enemy every moment; after the cutting off of their hopes, and the ſhutting up of their eyes towards all ways of relief; I ſay, after all this, and much more than can

be expreſſed, in the tender mercy of the Lord, have they felt this principle revealed in their hearts, and their hearts by degrees, through the ſkill and ſame mercy of the Lord, which revealed the principle, (and not from any worthineſs, or faith and obedience of theirs; for that was as freely given and preſerved, as the principle itſelf was revealed) gathered into the principle, where the life reigns, and where the ſtrength and dominion of death is broken in all thoſe, who by the allurings and guidings of the Spirit of the Lord are led thither.

Now the main thing neceſſary towards the redemption of the ſoul is, after the revealing of this principle, and ſome ſenſe and feeling of it, and the turning of the mind towards it, to wait to be made more and more acquainted with it, that in the ſtirrings, movings, and leadings thereof, there be a ready giving up to be gathered into it, and to be guided by it.

For though this principle be all life, yet it is at firſt but as a ſeed, and the appearance of the Lord in it is but as in a ſeed; very little, low, weak, hard to be diſcerned, eaſy to be overlooked and deſpiſed, and ſome greater and more undeniable appearance expected. Yet that is not the way, but the ſoul muſt become ſubject unto, and bowed under, this little appearance; and ſo as the ſeed gets advantage, and grows bigger and larger in thy heart, the appearance of the Lord will be greater and fuller there. But to look for the greater appearance, before the ſeed be owned and received in its leſſer appearance, (and the veſſel thereby fitted for the greater appearance) is not the way of God, but the deceit of the enemy, whereby he would deſtroy the ſoul, and cut it off from the Lord for ever; which he certainly will do, if he can keep the ſeed from growing there, and the ſoul from joining with and growing into it.

Therefore watch to feel the ſavour of life in thy heart day by day, and therein to feel leadings and drawings from the life, ſuitable to thy ſtate; for in this ſavour, and in theſe drawings, riſes the true light, which

which leads into the way of life. And then watch againſt the reaſonings and diſputations which the enemy will raiſe in thy mind, who will ſtrive to make thee a judge over theſe drawings; whereas the light, which ariſeth in the ſavour and in the drawings, is thy King, (though in this low appearance) and not to be judged by thy mind, thoughts, and reaſonings, but to judge them all down, and be bowed unto and obeyed by thee. And conſider, in the weight of thy ſpirit, art thou (in thy darkneſs, and with thy earthly mind) fit to be a judge concerning the light which ariſeth in thee? Or rather, is not the light, in its loweſt and weakeſt appearance, appointed and fitted by the Lord to judge thee, and make thee bow down in fear and trembling before it? and thy crown (thou in thy higheſt exaltation) is to be caſt at the loweſt footſtep thereof; and then it will in ſome meaſure, thou lying at the foot thereof, and bowing in ſpirit before it, enter into thee, and enlighten and quicken thee. But in thy being wiſe about it, or taking upon thee to judge concerning it, it will ſtand at a diſtance from thee, and leave thee in thy darkneſs and captivity.

Therefore conſider where thou art, and breathe unto the Lord to reveal that unto thee, which is proper for thee at preſent, and to bow thy ſpirit under his preſent will and manifeſtation to thee.

And be content to be little and low, and to receive little and low inſtructions from God, and to walk in the path of brokenneſs and humility before the Lord; for this is his way of fitting for, and advancing into, the high and glorious power of his life. And this my ſoul is aſſured of, that none ſhall enter into, or abide in, his kingdom, but as they become little, poor, and naked, and as they are led by the little child of God's begetting; who not at all anſwers the wiſdom of man and his expectations, but ſtill confounds them, and leads on in ſuch a path, as, if the eye of man's wiſdom be open, it will ſtill be crying out it can never bring to life. Yet that which diſputeth not, but be-

lieveth, at ſeaſons feels a progreſs, and that the growth of life had advantage in the heart by thoſe very things, which at preſent ſeemed to give death the advantage.

Therefore watch againſt thy underſtanding, and all the workings thereof, as ever thou deſireſt life; for it will ſtill betray thee, and either keep thee from the way, or turn thee out of the way, whenever thou hearkeneſt to it. And mark this; That which God ſows and brings up in thee, is a ſenſible plant, not a knowing mind; and thy right judgment is only in the ſenſibleneſs of that plant, and not in the underſtanding or comprehenſion of thy mind; yea, that ſenſible plant (which thy wiſdom will be very apt to deſpiſe and perk over) muſt batter down and bring to nothing thy underſtanding, and grow up in the ſtead of it, if ever thy ſoul be made an habitation for the life. Therefore ſink into the feeling, and dwell in the feeling, and wait for the ſavour of the principle of life, and the touches and drawings of the ſavour, and walk along in it towards the land of life, parting with all, and leaving behind thee, whatever the ſavour of life diſreliſheth; and entering into, and taking up, whatever the ſavour of the life reliſheth, that thou mayeſt be prepared for the Lord, and for the glorious appearances of his Spirit in thee.

And as thou art led into this, and becomeſt ſubject to this; ſo thou wilt taſte the Lord, and feel the ſweetneſs of his ointment, and the peace of his nature, and the joy of the beginnings of his kingdom in thy heart, and the blotting out of thy iniquities for his own name's ſake. For though the enemy may lay a load upon thee, and fill thee as much as he can with his filth, and lay it cloſe to thy charge, inſomuch as thou art not able to acquit thyſelf at all, but art as ready to charge thyſelf therewith, as the enemy is to charge thee; yet the Lord conſidereth the ſeed he hath ſown in thee, and the deſire which he hath wrought in thy heart to be joined thereunto; and he knoweth whence the ſtirring of this mind is, and how weak thou art in this hour of thy darkneſs and captivity; and the in-

intent of his heart is to deliver thee from all this, and not to condemn thee for it.

But oh! take heed of limiting the Lord to give forth ſo clear a light, as the natural underſtanding will be judging neceſſary! but be content with the light which ariſeth in the ſavour, and ſhineth inwardly to thy ſpirit in the drawing; and be ſubject and bowed under the light of the drawing, though ever ſo much againſt the light of the creaturely underſtanding and the reaſonings thereof.

Clearneſs of light is a ſtate which is to be grown up into; but before thou comeſt to this, thy underſtanding muſt be darkened, confounded, and brought to nothing; and thou canſt not have ſuch a clearneſs there, while it is confounding. There is indeed a true clearneſs in the principle of life (proportionable to its ſtate and growth) even then; but the reaſonings of thy dark mind will be continually overclouding and overbearing it, (as if it were darkneſs, and not the light) and will prevail, unleſs thou be kept in the ſavour, and ſuffer not thy underſtanding to judge, but keep it under the judgment of the ſavour. Mark, therefore, heedfully this which follows;

The firſt work of the Lord, is to confound the knowledge and underſtanding of the creature; eſpecially in thoſe, who have been deep in wiſdom and experience of things; for if they were not cloſely purſued with darkneſs and confuſion, they would preſently be gathering a ſtock into the old ſtorehouſe again, and ſo grow wiſe after the fleſh, and never learn the life of the Spirit. Now in this work of confounding, how can the leadings of God's Spirit be manifeſt and clear after the fleſh, and to the fleſhly underſtanding? Yea, if they were manifeſt after this manner, how were it poſſible to withhold the fleſhly part from drinking them in? and ſo the man would live again, but the ſeed not live, which gains its life (and being, and form, and perfection) in the man, by the death of the man; even by the man's being hunted, and battered, and broken out of his wiſdom, and know-

ledge, and reaſoning, and comprehenſion; and becoming as a fool or child, being able to know nothing, nor retain nothing, nor perform nothing, nor keep his ſtanding; but ſtill as he is led, and taught, and created, and preſerved in the power, and by the preſence of the life.

Concerning the Two COVENANTS.

WHAT is the covenant of the law? Doth it not contain and hold forth eternal life to man, upon his faith in, and obedience to, the Spirit of God?

What is the covenant of the goſpel? Doth it not contain the promiſe to the ſeed, and life to man through the ſeed, and forgiveneſs of his ſins for the ſeed's ſake, and the uniting of his heart to, and preſerving it in, the ſeed, through the grace; as alſo repentance, faith, and obedience from the grace?

Mark then the difference between the two covenants. The covenant of the law is all of works, and according to works; yea, even the faith that is there found (which is begotten and brought forth in man by virtue of that covenant) is of the man, or of the working principle. The covenant of the goſpel is all of grace; and the very works that are found are from the grace, and the ſeed beſtowed and conveyed by promiſe.

Now mark; The ſeed (or ſtanding principle of life) in both covenants is the ſame. It is the ſame Chriſt by which Adam ſtood before the fall, and which was the promiſed ſeed after the fall. The light of both the covenants is the ſame, even the eternal light of the Spirit. The life and power is the ſame, even the life and power of the Spirit. The end or mark, at which man aims, and towards which he travels, in both is the ſame; even the land of reſt and peace in the

the Spirit of the Father, who begets a living ſoul under both covenants. But the terms of the covenants, and the manner of diſpenſing them, are different; and the wombs, whereof the children of each covenant are born, are different likewiſe; the one being the working nature, (which alſo came from God, and hath its bleſſing from him in its obedience and ſubjection to him) the other the womb of grace, which brings forth the child of grace in man, according to, and by virtue of, the promiſe; and doth not find a will in the day of man's choice and liberty, but createth a will in the day of God's powerful appearance in it.

Yet this ſeed of promiſe, or this new man begotten by the ſeed of life according to the promiſe, muſt walk through the law, and travel through all the dark paths of that covenant, before it come to inherit the promiſed land; where the rigour of the law and weakneſs of the fleſh will be thoroughly felt, and many tranſgreſſions and many ſtripes; yea, many captivities and cuttings off from the life may be felt alſo; yea, the ſeed of the firſt covenant may live and flouriſh, and enjoy and boaſt much of God, while this ſeed is miſerable. But when this womb is viſited with the ſtrength of grace, and free power of life, and bringeth forth her children therein, and no more is called for from the working part of man, but all brought forth in the free, full, and freſh power of life; then ſhall the ſeed of Iſrael, after the promiſe, become an everlaſting habitation for, and a perfect joy in, the life.

Therefore diſtinguiſh in ſpirit between the law and grace, and the covenants of each, and the diſpenſations of each, and how they are mixed and intermingled, both towards man and towards the ſeed, in the ſeveral diſpenſations in which each are brought forth. For there hath been no perfect covenant brought forth, either of works or of grace, (in a way of publick adminiſtration) ſince the fall of Adam. Had there been a perfect covenant of works, there had been no capacity of ſalvation thereby to fallen man. Had there been a perfect covenant of grace, there had been no

poſſibility or capacity of deſtruction; for grace, in its perfect going forth, cannot but overcome and ſave the man. But God ordereth both theſe covenants, both towards the man and towards the ſeed, according to the ſtate of the man and the ſtate of the ſeed, and according to what (in his eternal wiſdom) he judgeth meet to work upon them thereby.

Man being fallen, and having loſt his ſtrength of faith and obedience in and to the requirings of God's Spirit, the viſitation of him is now by grace, and not merely to call forth what is left in him, but to help him with light and power, and by the influences of the grace and of the power to quicken him towards God. Yet man, in the receiving of this, is apt to overlook the grace, and attribute too much to his own ſtrength, thinking himſelf ſomewhat, becauſe of the grace and power which hath viſited him, and new refreſhed the ſtrength and nature of his principle in him again. Hereby he is apt to fix his ſtanding on his obedience to the Spirit or appearance of the grace, and ſo in effect builds his life and hopes again on his own principle, or on a new-received power, as held or kept to by him, (which he may fall from now, as well as he did at firſt) and not on the free begetting and free preſerving of a principle of life in him.

This viſitation of grace is to all mankind, there being none upon earth, whom the Lord doth not thus ſeek and viſit with the light of his eternal life, thus adminiſtered through the grace; which ſo far as they fall in with, the Lord doth receive them and beget life in them, engrafting them into the living vine, and preſerving them according to their abiding in it, and according to their obedience to him in the ſpringings up of the ſap of the vine in them.

But beſides this common adminiſtration of the grace to all mankind, God formerly picked out a people after the fleſh of Abraham, and afterwards a people after the ſpirit of Abraham, towards whom, in a more peculiar way, his grace did adminiſter itſelf, and whom he dealt with, *not as with other nations*, but choſe to love

love and work up into life and communion with himſelf, by a more eſpecial adminiſtration and viſitation of his love and grace. The one of theſe were that people of the Jews, the other the believing Chriſtians.

With the Jews he remembered the covenant with Abraham. By virtue of that he loved and choſe them to be his people after the fleſh (or his outward people); by virtue of that he brought them out of Egypt, led them through the wilderneſs, brought them into Canaan, giving them an inheritance therein, and delivering them from their enemies time after time.

Yet he alſo made another covenant with them (even that of the law) which was ſuitable to their ſtate, and which their nature deſired, and choſe to walk with God in, but hardly ever kept it, and ſo brought the curſe and miſery due thereby upon their heads, and at laſt were utterly cut off, ſo far and ſo long as the Lord pleaſeth to let the curſe of that covenant have power over them, until he ſhall pleaſe again to remember to them his covenant with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, and breathe life through it into their dry bones.

Now though God did make this covenant with them, becauſe they were fleſhly, and their preſent ſtate required it, yet he did not diſannul or make void the other to them, all the while their day laſted; but remembered loving-kindneſs and mercy towards them in it, often delivering and redeeming them for his own name's ſake, pointing them alſo to the word in the heart, and the gracious adminiſtration thereof. But they were blinded and held captive in the earthly nature and principle, and in the law thereof, and held their marriage and union with God thereby. And ſee, though this adminiſtration to the Jews, (wherein God did ſtrive with them by his Spirit, and ſometimes ſtir life, and beget a true ſenſibleneſs in many of them, calling to them for the circumciſion of the heart, and pointing them to the principle of life in the heart, whereby it might be circumciſed) though this advanced them far above the Heathen; yet they,

through

through the flesh and the letter, at last fell below the very state of the Heathen, proving greater enemies to, and persecutors of, the life than they; and so the Lord brake them off from the olive-tree into which they were ingrafted, and cut them off from the covenant which he had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; whereas, thitherto, (though he had been often provoked by, and sorely offended with, them) yet he had still loved them for their father's sake. After them, and in their stead, he chose the believing Gentiles, ingrafted them into the stock from whence these were broken, letting them into a sweeter and fuller, and more spiritual and abiding state, and influences of the covenant. For here the life was manifested, and the light did shine in great beauty and clearness. And they were gathered into the true fold of the Shepherd (besides the outward state, which was also built up by the Lord, and preserved for a season among them); and they saw their standing to be by and in the grace, and were established in the grace, and could feel the good pleasure calling, the good pleasure working, the good pleasure being and doing all in them; and could cry grace, grace to this building; and say, not for any works that they had wrought, or for their faith in, or obedience to, the light of life, which was made manifest; but of his own mercy he saved them, who wrought in them both the will and the deed of his own good pleasure, and preserved them by his power through faith (which was of his gift and begetting) unto salvation.

Yet for all this, there was somewhat of the law or light eternal to be administered unto them, which was suitable to the natural part or first principle through which they were to travel, even until the man, or first nature, was wholly wasted; whereby some of them were in danger of falling away wholly, others of coming under the chastisement and judgment, with which the Lord pursued them, that they might not be utterly condemned with the world. Mark, therefore, this brief sum of the matter.

1. Man

1. Man fell under the firſt covenant: his reſtitution is never to be thereby, but by the ſecond; through which God works up veſſels into a ſtate of life and glory in the adminiſtration of his grace.

2. But in this working up of the veſſel, he ſees neceſſary to make uſe of the other covenant, according to the capacity that is left in man to anſwer it; and ſo as that capacity wears out, the covenant of the law waſteth and paſſeth away by degrees, and the covenant of grace ſucceeds and fills up the room thereof.

3. There is great danger of falling from the life for ſome, as alſo of chaſtiſements and judgments to others, while this capacity remains; even while the earthly nature, ſpirit, and principle is not worn out, by the entrance, death, and reſurrection of the principle of life in the heart.

4. When the firſt principle is wholly dead, and the heart perfectly formed in the life, and all perfectly raiſed and renewed in the life; then there is no danger of falling, or fear of chaſtiſement; but perfect life, and peace, and joy with God in his Spirit of power and glory for evermore.

5. Though God begin with man in a covenant of grace, and bring in a covenant of the law to man (ſuitable to his preſent ſtate) only in ſubſerviency to the covenant of grace; and would not have man ſtick there, but cling to him in the grace, and ſeek remiſſion through the grace for his own name's ſake; yet man, through the prevalency of the firſt principle in him, (and his looking on God through that) is apt to fix on this covenant, and draw comfort or diſcouragement to himſelf from his own obedience or failings, and not live on the freeneſs of God's love, and the faithfulneſs of his heart to the ſoul in all conditions, for his Chriſt's ſake.

This hath been the great error of Iſrael, (even of Iſrael after the fleſh, and of Iſrael after the ſpirit alſo) that while God lays hold on them by his love, promiſe, mercy, and grace; yet they lay hold on him by another

another covenant; even their obedience to the laws he gives forth; not knowing, that the obedience to the firſt covenant muſt be a fruit of the ſecond; and that they are not beloved or accepted for that, but that that flows into them, and is brought forth in them, through the love, and through the free and powerful workings thereof in them. I ſay, this (to wit, their obedience) is not the ground of their acceptance or being loved, ſo far as they are in this covenant; though as far as the other hath yet an influence, it hath ſome force in this reſpect. But this the eye is to paſs through, and to be fixed on the other covenant, ſtill waiting for the revealing and manifeſting the riches of the mercy thereof, and to feel the waſhing and cleanſing thereof from all the guilt, which under the remainders of the firſt covenant will be daily contracting, while any thing of the earthly principle and offending part is left ſtanding.

There hath been in this day a very glorious adminiſtration of life to the ſons of men, (after the long foregoing night) wherein both theſe covenants have been again adminiſtered in Spirit, ſuitable to the ſtate of the perſons whereto they have been adminiſtered. And becauſe of the neceſſity of faith and obedience in the new covenant, (both to the ſeed and to the man) the man is ſo apt to fix his eye and build his hopes upon them, (and not upon the free love of him that works them in him) that he is in danger of falling from and diſhonouring the free grace, (which is the hope of Iſrael) and of loſing his ſtate, which is not ſure, (how far ſoever it be advanced in a preſent power and dominion) further than it is built upon and fixed in the grace. And therefore is this given forth, that the life in Iſrael may be ſure and laſting, and that they may grow up perfectly (out of the principle of nature) into the principle of grace, and know the difference between their being united to, and living in, God; either in the fear, faith, or love, ſo far as they can receive or retain them; and God's living in them, and creating continually the fear, faith, and love in

in them, and bringing forth all the fruits thereof in and from himſelf.

For though the covenants are and have been ſtill the ſame from the beginning, yet the manifeſtations of them have been ſtill greater and greater. And a greater manifeſtation may yet be of the love and life of God (and the ſweet free nature of his covenant) than hath hitherto been, or yet is; which Iſrael is to wait for and feel the need of, before it be brought forth. And though all thoſe forementioned (to wit, of *fear, faith and love)* are precious ſtates, which God works his Iſrael up to, in and by the covenant of his grace, according to their ſeveral growths and capacities; yea, and according to which the delight and pleaſure of his ſoul is in them; yet the abſolute aſſurance is only in the latter, even where the creature is ſo gathered into the life of God, that its ſtate depends not at all upon what itſelf is, or doth, but only upon what God is and will be to his freely of himſelf, and for his own name's ſake.

This is written in love, for preſervation; and not for diſcouragement or deſtruction; but that that which ſtandeth, may feel where to fix. For in the higheſt ſtate that man can be advanced to, yet if any of the creaturely principle be left in him unſubdued, and not yet buried with the ſeed into its death, there is ſo far a capacity of falling; and his fall (in caſe the Lord do ſuffer his feet to ſlip) will be the greater, by how much the higher and more exalted he was in the dominion and preſence of the power, and by how much the more it was unexpected by him.

And this my heart hath often ſaid within me, and ſtill ſaith to a weary ſoul, which hath felt the touches of life, and deſireth everlaſting unity with it; yea, to all that deſire to walk with God, and to abide in the power of his life in any diſpenſation; *Keep the eye of thy mind to the grace which viſits thee; not ſo much to the light which comes from the grace, as to the grace from which the light comes; and daily look for help and remiſſion from it, as freely as thou hadſt at firſt. And*

in

in all loſſes, and darkneſſes, and riſings up of guilt and condemnation, caſt thyſelf at the foot of it, ſaying in thy heart, If thou hadſt not freely viſited me at firſt, I had not ſet one ſtep in the path of life; and if thou doſt not as freely viſit me ſtill, and renew life in me daily of thine own accord, and from the ſame love and goodneſs, I cannot but be liable to miſcarry. Oh! that I might obey every beam of thy light, and every moving of thy life, but I dare not undertake it! Oh! that thou wouldſt undertake for me my righteouſneſs, my obedience, my love to thee! My faith in thee is like the morning dew, which ſoon paſſeth away, and I cannot find or come at it again! Oh! raiſe up life from an everlaſting ſeed, and gather my heart into it, and preſerve me in it; not according to what I am or have done, or yet can be or do; but for thine own name's ſake, and in thy love to thy ſeed, and to thy creature in and through thy ſeed by the promiſe.

Thus as any grows into the covenant of grace, through the covenant of works, (which is neceſſary to be diſpenſed in ſome meaſure, till the man's nature and principle be wholly worn out by it) they will find ſure footing there, and building upon that, from which the ſoul (that cleaveth to it in the virtue and nature that floweth from it) can never be removed. Yea, the peace and ſafety of Iſrael in their travels (fixing here) will be greater, and their aſſurance greater, and their falls and the prevailings of the enemy not ſo dangerous (that being had recourſe to, which never fails of healing that ſoul which lies at the foot of it, and in heart waits its ſeaſon); however they may be hurried and driven about with tempeſts, through the violence of the enemy, and good pleaſure of Him, who ſeeth it fit for the preſent ſtate of the ſoul, to have it thus exerciſed.

The intent of God, in the ſalvation of man, is to magnify the riches of his grace, and the freeneſs of his love. And this is effected, as man is broken in his natural principle and power of believing and obeying; and a ſeed of life freely raiſed up in him, and he freely gathered

gathered into it, and preſerved in it. And where is the boaſter here? Or where is he, who in this ſtate can throw a ſtone at another becauſe of his tranſgreſſions? Nay, nay. He that is freely forgiven, and lives merely and for ever by mercy alone, he is formed and brought forth in the tenderneſs of the bowels which begat and nouriſh him; and he crieth mightily for the ſpreading of the ſame bowels over other ſinners, waiting for the ſeaſon of their viſitation and gathering into the ſame love, and by the ſame powerful hand, if it may be.

Oh! my God, bring up the power and ſweetneſs of thy life in Iſrael, and ſhew mercy to all nations! Purge the earth with thy fan, ſcatter the corruption thereof from the hearts of the ſons of men, and make them the paradiſe of thy pleaſure; that thou, O living God, mayſt dwell in, and ſhine forth from, thy temple; and it may no longer lie waſte, nor the abomination of deſolation defile it, to the diſhonour of thy name, and to the ruin and miſery of thy creation.

POSTSCRIPT.

SOME things are exceeding neceſſary for loſt man to be acquainted with, in his travels from his loſt eſtate, into the life and peace of God. As,

1. To know his loſt eſtate and miſery for ever, unleſs the Lord pity and help him.

2. To know the light, wherewith the Lord viſits the ſouls that ſit in darkneſs; that he may wait for the ſhinings thereof, and in them travel with the leading Spirit of life, from the darkneſs and death of ſin towards the land of the living.

3. To breathe unto the Lord, and wait to have his heart joined to the light and power of life daily, and ſeparated from the powers of death and darkneſs, under which he was, and ſtill is, a captive, but as the Lord appears for him and delivers him.

4. To

4. To put forth all the ſtrength of his ſoul and mind, and all the members of his body, in the ſervice of the Lord. For as he is, in any meaſure, ſet free by the Lord from the ſervice of ſin; ſo is he to ſerve and obey the Lord in righteouſneſs.

5. To wait daily to receive the ſtrength from the Lord, wherewith he ſerveth the Lord. For though, by the redemption of the Lord, he feels the creaturely part (in ſome meaſure) renewed and reſtored, and an ability received to ſerve righteouſneſs, which before he had not; yet this is not ſo given to him, as that the Lord hath it not ſtill in his hand, who can ſtop or let it out at his pleaſure. And happy is that man, who looketh not upon himſelf as ſomewhat, becauſe of what in any kind he hath received, but feeleth his dependence upon the Lord.

6. To feel the grace and mercy of the Lord, in whatever he receiveth from the Lord, or whatever he doth for the Lord. It is all of the Lord; happy is the man that ſees it. It is the mercy of the Lord, that man is not conſumed. It is the mercy of the Lord, that any man in any ſtate (or degree of life and redemption) is preſerved. *The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever, therefore is Iſrael ſafe.* This will be the ſong of praiſe in the houſe of the Lord for ever.

7. To wait for the waſting of the man, and the raiſing up of the ſeed day by day; that that to which the covenant of works is natural, and which cannot but deſire it and ſeek to live by it, may be worn out; and that to which the covenant of grace is as natural, (if not more) and which alone lives by the promiſe, and through the faith, and in the grace which freely flows from the eternal fountain, may be raiſed up, and ſucceed in the place and ſtead thereof.

Here is ſafety indeed. Here is everlaſting righteouſneſs ſo brought in, as that it can never be removed out of the heart more. Here everlaſting life and the ſoul are one for ever. Here is no more going into captivity; which Iſrael, ſettled in Canaan, and enjoying the ſweetneſs and reſt thereof, under the firſt covenant may

may. Here are no tears, nor ſighing, nor departing from the life, nor grieving the Holy Spirit of the Lord, nor being grieved by it any more; but what the heart deſires of God, and what God deſires of the heart, mutually received; and the going forth, and the coming in, and the abiding, one and the ſame for ever; the ſame life, and power, and love, and eternal ſweetneſs being all and in all for ever. This is the mark of Iſrael, and the haven of its eternal reſt, to which the Lord is leading the *poor*, *hungry*, *empty*, *mourning*, *afflicted*, *toſſed* ſouls, to whom it is as ſure in the love and good-will of God, (and in the counſel of his heart determined thereupon) as if they were already in it.

TO

FRIENDS

IN

ENGLAND, IRELAND, SCOTLAND, HOLLAND, NEW-ENGLAND, BARBADOES, or any where elſe, where the LORD GOD ſhall order this to come, in the tender Spirit of Life and Love, Greeting.

O FRIENDS!

IN the pure love of God, and freſh breath of his living Spirit, is it now on my heart to write unto you, in fear, in tenderneſs, in meltings, and true ſenſe of ſpirit; and the Lord ſo guide my heart and words, as that they may reach the witneſs in the hearts of all that ſhall read, and may be felt by that to be purely of God, and not at all of the birth, will, or wiſdom of the fleſh.

I remember, I remember, O friends! and it is in mine heart to put you in remembrance of, the cloudy, diſmal, and dark day, wherein the Shepherd of Iſrael viſited our ſouls, and what condition we were in, when he cauſed the light of life to ſhine upon our tabernacles, and to ſpring up in us. Oh! the deſolation, the deſolation that our ſouls were in, in that day! Oh! the wanderings up and down, the ſeekings, huntings, mournings, bitter complaints, and deep diſtreſſes for want

want of our God, and for want of the guidance of his good Spirit! Who can utter now what was then felt of the thickneſs of darkneſs, of the miſery, the loſs, the dreadful captivity that poor ſouls were entangled and wrapped up in! Oh! how acceptable was the viſitation of God then! how deep was the ſenſe of his tender mercy in viſiting! how glad was the ſoul then of the living path revealed! how unfeignedly did it cleave unto the Lord, and embrace the meaſure of his life revealed inwardly to the mind! how did it fear! how did it wait! how did it watch againſt the enemy, and cry to the Father for his help! How beautiful were the feet, and how pleaſant the viſitations, of them who brought the tidings of this life and peace! What love, what unity, what embracing one another in this life, was then witneſſed in the hearts of one another! and where this lives and grows to this day, oh! how precious is that veſſel! but where the life in any is departed from; where another thing (of another nature) hath entered and been entertained by any, there it is not ſo; but there the love is grown cold, the mind changed, the goodneſs of the Lord forgotten, and the poor ſoul entangled again in that which formerly it felt ſome releaſe and deliverance from.

Now that the enemy would endeavour to entangle the minds of the redeemed, and to draw them back from the Lord, and his pure meaſure of life in the heart, towards perdition again, that is not to be queſtioned; it being his nature and property ſo to do; and that he would uſe not only his ſtrength, but alſo his ſubtilty and deceivableneſs to effect this (his aim being at the church and redeemed of God, more than at the world); appearing as an angel of light, in motions like light, in ways like life; this is not to be doubted of neither; for how elſe could he gain upon that, whoſe eye is towards, and whoſe aim is after, the Lord? But this is the great thing for my heart, and the hearts of friends, to be exerciſed in, to wait on the Lord in his true light, clearly to diſcern how far we have been aſſaulted by this enemy, and how far

the Lord hath preſerved us from his aſſaults, or ſuffered him to prevail upon us; for he hath prevailed in former ages, under the miniſtration of the law in the prophets days, and under the miniſtration of the goſpel in the apoſtles days; yea, and I muſt needs ſay, he hath alſo prevailed in our days, on all that have not watched in the pure fear, and been preſerved by the pure power of the Lord. Now doth it not concern every one to look up to the Lord, to guide his heart in ſearching, that he may truly underſtand his ſtate? That, if he can witneſs the preſervation of the power, he may ſing praiſe to the power; but if he hath been betrayed, and come to a loſs, he may ſeek after the power of life again, and wait for deliverance and reſtoring by it. For with the Lord God is mercy and bowels, and he ſeeketh after and ſaveth the loſt, not once only, but again and again; only here is the great danger of ſouls, when they are ignorant of their captivity, and judge in themſelves, and are guided by that which ſhould be judged down and deſtroyed in them. When darkneſs is the light and leader in the mind, oh! whither doth that ſoul travel! How doth it judge, think, act! how ſure doth the enemy hold it in his bonds and chains! how eaſily doth he prejudice it againſt that which is of God, and for its good, and incline it to think favourably of that which only appeareth to be of God, but is not, and is to its hurt!

Now, friends, there were three things on my heart this morning, which ſprang up in true ſenſe and demonſtration of God's Spirit, as ſubtil engines which the enemy hath endeavoured to make uſe of to hurt our ſouls; which any that have been entangled in, have received hurt by, and thoſe that have eſcaped have cauſe to bleſs the name of the preſerver of Iſrael.

The firſt is this: By begetting in perſons prejudices againſt thoſe whom the Lord hath choſen, and pleaſeth to make uſe of in miniſtering to his people. Precious is the miniſtry that is in the Spirit, for the building up in life, as well as for begetting. How doth the enemy ſtrive to prejudice the world againſt them, that there

there may be no begetting to God from amongſt them! And how doth he alſo endeavour to raiſe prejudices amongſt the begotten, that he may interrupt, and (if poſſibly) ſtop their building up!

The ſecond is this: To draw men from eyeing and ſubjecting to the preſent diſpenſation, by an earneſt looking after and waiting for another, or further. The ſecurity and bleſſing of the ſoul lies in the preſent diſpenſation, in bowing to God there, in being diligent under the exerciſes of his Spirit therein. Now that which draws the mind another way from the preſent exerciſe, from belief in the preſent gift, under a ſpecious pretence of waiting for ſomewhat more glorious to appear, betrays and deceives, in thus turning the mind out of the path which God holds forth and guides into, towards expectation of a path as yet to be revealed.

The third is this: Under a pretence of ſticking to the enlightening and guidance of one's own meaſure, to ſet up a ſenſe and judgment in the mind, both concerning perſons, practices, and things, which is not truly of the meaſure, but ſecretly inſtilled into and raiſed up in the mind, contrary to the pure meaſure of life. All theſe have I not only ſeen in ſpirit, but been ſorely aſſaulted with; and that they have not prevailed upon me even to deſtruction, is the tender mercy and kindneſs of the Lord unto me; and in that tenderneſs and love, for the preſervation of others, do I write theſe things. And indeed I have ſomewhat in my heart to ſay ſingly and nakedly concerning each of theſe, which the Lord guide and bleſs to the conditions of thoſe who ſtand in need thereof.

Firſt, Concerning thoſe prejudices which the enemy is apt to lay before the minds of friends concerning thoſe whom the Lord hath choſen to miniſter to them in the power of his truth, I ſhall ſay this: look over the former diſpenſations of God; there were falſe prophets under the law, and falſe apoſtles and miniſters in the time of that diſpenſation of the goſpel, who did ſtrive and labour hard to diſturb, undermine, and

overturn the building and work of God in the ſpirits of his people then; but did God ſuffer the true prophets under the law, or the true apoſtles, to fall and loſe their miniſtry? And is not this preſent diſpenſation pure and living, and able to preſerve both the inſtructors and inſtructed in the Lord? It is natural to the enemy to ſuggeſt ſuch a thing; but let all that fear the Lord, and love his truth, take heed how they entertain ſuch a ſuggeſtion. Beſides, he that hath felt the pure power in his heart, and waited to be carried through the work of it, and hath been carried through and brought into the dominion, and ſet as a pillar in the temple of the Lord, it is not eaſy (if poſſible) for him to fall, the Lord having undertaken for him, that he ſhall *go no more forth*, as Rev. iii. 12. But let me ſay this to thee, O ſoul! whoever haſt entertained this prejudice, Thou, through prejudices and ſuggeſtions, judgeſt them fallen; but do not they, in the true eternal light of the Spirit of life, ſee thee fallen? Nay, if thou couldſt but retire to the pure meaſure that at firſt quickened thee, mighteſt not thou feel thy own fall?

To the ſecond, of drawing out the mind to look after another or further diſpenſation, I have this to ſay: Conſider what this diſpenſation is; is it not of the ſeed itſelf? Is it not of the light, life, and power of the Father, manifeſted in the ſeed, and in the ſoul through the ſeed? Is not the ſenſe quick, and the love pure, where this is felt? What wouldſt thou have, poor ſoul? Oh! that thou felteſt the virtue and power of this! ſurely thou wouldſt then find that thou mighteſt ſit down here in the peace, purity, power, dominion, and perfection of life; for it is all in the ſeed, and to be revealed to thee, and become thine, as thou art gathered into the ſeed, and the ſeed opened in thee. Beſides, are there not many that have witneſſed, and that can witneſs from God, that this is the diſpenſation which is to go through the whole earth? And ſhall it be laid aſide in the beginning of its work? "If there "had been a law given, which could have given life," (ſaid

(ſaid the apoſtle) "righteouſneſs ſhould have been by "the law." God doth not change. When he hath brought forth that which will do the thing, why ſhould he change it? Now of the ability of this there are many witneſſes; yea, it hath brought forth life and righteouſneſs in thoſe that have been ſubject to it, and was once owned as the deſire of our ſouls, and became a covering to our eyes, that we could look no further; our hearts, in the ſenſe and life of truth, being ſatisfied that this was the very thing we had long mourned after, and waited for. Oh! that which begets another ſenſe in any of us, (under what pretence or appearance ſoever) let it be the abomination of our ſouls, that we hearken not, nor give the leaſt entertainment to it, leſt by it we be betrayed of our portion in the bleſſed treaſure and inheritance.

To the third I ſay: It is a ſtanding truth, the ſtandard we were invited to, and to which we are to keep for ever, even the meaſure of life in our own veſſels. This will juſtify us in our ſubjection to whatever it reveals; and its juſtification will ſtand, whatſoever any man elſe ſhall ſay to the contrary. But this is at unity in itſelf, and never oppoſeth the motion or appearance of life in another. Now this is certain, the enemy will appear as near life and its motion as he can; and if I receive his appearance, I am not ſubject to the meaſure of life in me, but to him under his deceitful appearance. Therefore if that which appears like life in thee contradict a practice or appearance of life in others, (who were in the truth before thee, and are in the growth thereof far beyond thee) oughteſt thou not to be ſober in ſpirit, and to wait in fear, leſt thou ſhouldeſt be deceived; leſt thou ſhouldeſt exalt ſelf and the enemy in thee, and not the truth; yea, leſt thy heart ſhould grow hard, and thy neck ſtiff, againſt thoſe who are over thee in the Lord, and ſo thou loſe the benefit of their watching over thee, and counſel to thee, and of God's preſervation: for out of the truth, in the deceitful appearance, there is no preſervation, nor true light, nor juſtification of life; but ſelf-con-

ceit, fleſhly confidence, and the juſtification of a man's own ſpirit; and his wiſdom then gets up, and exalts itſelf, as if it were the right thing. The Lord gave the meaſure of life to thee; and the Lord alſo hath given fathers, guides, inſtructors, watchmen in his Iſrael. Theſe have a ſervice from the Lord towards thee, who knoweth that thy ſoul hath need of that ſervice: now if the enemy can prejudice thee againſt, and withdraw thee from, the uſe of what thou needeſt, art thou not in danger of falling and miſcarriage? Doſt not thou ſet up the meaſure of life in thee (if not another thing) beyond its place, ſtate, and growth? And can any thing grow and thrive out of the order and wiſdom of God? Nay, nay; the very meaſure of life itſelf will this way come to wither and die in thee, and another thing live in its place; and the ſword of the Lord will be drawn againſt thee, and thou wilt be cut off from the body, and alſo from him who is the quickener and preſerver of the body. Therefore, my friends, as the enemy watcheth to deceive and deſtroy, ſo the Lord keep our ſouls in the true watch and looking up to him, who (to thoſe that fear him) diſcovereth the deceit, and preſerveth from the ſnare.

And this is witneſſed concerning the meaſure of life in the heart, and the way of its acting and operation, that it always acts in its place, even in due ſubjection to the Father of ſpirits, and to his life in others according to its growth; for there is no rent nor diviſion in the living body; no ſetting up one meaſure of life againſt another meaſure, or one motion of life againſt another motion, or one practice againſt another; but all there is in the unity, in the love, in the tenderneſs, in the ſenſe, in the peace, in the dominion, in the ſubjection; and that which differeth or diſſenteth from the life, interrupting the union and uniformity in the life, is not of the life; which when it is every where caſt out, life to life will anſwer every where; which day my ſoul breatheth and waiteth for, even the day wherein life alone ſhall live and reign in every veſſel, and all the devices and ſnares of the enemy not be able

able to enter upon, or catch any of God's little ſimple-hearted ones; but ſtill, by the power of life riſing in clearneſs againſt them, be thrown back upon the enemy, to his torment and diſadvantage.

And, O dear lambs! conſider how eaſy it is for you to miſtake, err, and wander from the truth; and do not refuſe the care, watchfulneſs, and tender counſel of thoſe who were inſtrumental to beget you to, and are yet over you, in the Lord. Alas! how eaſy is it for the enemy to deceive your ſimplicity, and get between you and your life; and then ye are liable to miſ-ſee and miſ-act in all ye do, and to follow the enemy, as if he were your right guide; and to fight againſt, and reſiſt him, who is your true leader, as if he were your enemy? The life in you is to be your guide and leader, as it groweth up and receiveth ability, ſtrength, and dominion from the Lord; but the heir is to be under tutors and governors, till the time appointed of the Father. And the ſeed is meek, humble, tender, lowly, ſenſible of its own ſtate and weakneſs, and ſubject to the exaltation, dominion, and pure authority of life in others, where the Lord hath ſo exalted it. That which is otherwiſe in you (which is high, exalted, conceited of itſelf, and not ſubject to every degree of life in others, according to its ſtate) is another thing, which is not of the true kind, but only under a guiſe appears to you as the true; and as it gets entrance, corrupts your hearts from the true, and diſtils its poiſon into your ſpirits! which ye believing, entertaining, and feeding upon, as if it were the true, grow up in his poiſonful nature, (loſing the pure nature and fellowſhip of the body) and are travelling whither ye are not aware; being gone from that which at firſt gathered, into that which, through ſubtilty, hath deceived, appearing to you as if it was ſtill the ſame, and that ye ſtill keep to it, but others are departed: whereas the thing is clean contrary in the ſight of the Lord, and in the ſight of thoſe who keep to the anointing, and ſee with his eye. Therefore, O dear lambs and babes! what need have we to wait

wait in tender ſenſe for the Lord's preſervation of us in that nature, ſpirit, and life, whereof we were begotten, and wherein we were taught, that there we may ſtill learn and keep to the true teaching, in the innocency and ſimplicity of love, and not hearken to the wiſdom and reaſonings of another ſpirit, who lieth at watch to catch the mind with his wiles, and draw from the true thing. Mark how we learned at firſt: was it not in a nature, by a ſecret inſtinct and inclination of our minds towards the life, and the path, ways, and practices thereof, whereinto the body (which before had been gathered) was led and walked before us? The ſame life, when it maketh us part of the flock, bringeth us into the ſame footſteps; and there we walk with them, in the unity of the ſame life, and ſenſe of the ſame leader; but if the enemy can at any time draw us from this ſenſe, and from the belief and practices or practice which we have received in this ſenſe, (even out of the limits of this nature and its naturalneſs) how eaſy is it for him to perſuade us to queſtion right things in our minds and underſtandings, as if they were wrong, (darkening our eye, and cauſing us to overlook and forget the leading and motion which we had in the true ſenſe and nature from the anointing itſelf) and ſo confidently to think and conclude, that we took up ſuch or ſuch a practice by imitation, and have held it up in form? Whereas the Lord (who forgetteth not what and how he hath wrought in us) knoweth that we took it up in the ſenſe and leading of his truth, and are now tempted from that in the reaſoning ſubtilty, which we formerly practiſed in the true innocent ſimplicity. And thus getting into us a belief and entertainment of his ſnare, he draws us from that which at firſt led us, and from the practices we were at firſt led into, to hearken to him, and follow him, who inſtructeth us in a way we were not inſtructed in before while the Lord inſtructed us; and ſo deſtroyeth his nature, and the work of his Spirit in us, dividing us both from the head and living body; and ſo our ſtanding, growth, ſenſe,

ſenſe, and judgment is altered, and we are neither to the Lord what we were before, nor is he to us what he was before; for he hates that ſpirit in all its appearances, and cannot have unity with the ſouls that are entangled by it. Therefore, dear friends, as we prize our gathering to, and abiding with, the Lord, and the enjoyment of his love, peace, joy, and preſence at preſent, and the crown and inheritance of life with him for ever; ſo let us fear, ſo let us watch, ſo let us cry unto him, to be preſerved by him, which gathered us in that into which he gathered, and not by any means be betrayed (through ſubtilty of the enemy) into another thing, where the life of the body (and union with the body) cannot poſſibly be witneſſed, nor the true juſtification of the Lord; but only an appearing juſtification of a man's own ſpirit, which muſt afterwards come under condemnation. Ye, who are in the living and true ſenſe, will feel my love, tenderneſs, and faithfulneſs in what I write; and ye who are not, the Lord God of bowels pity, and recover out of the ſnare and wrong judgment, that ye may feel it; and feeling that which is true, may be joined to it, drinking of its virtue and preſervation, and live; which is the earneſt deſire of my ſoul to the Lord; who am

Your brother and companion in the tribulation and mercies which attend the living,

ISAAC PENINGTON.

From Ayleſbury priſon, the 14th of the Fifth month, 1666.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

DEAR friends, brethren, lambs, and plants of the Moſt High, it is in my heart to add one thing, which I have been deeply exerciſed about, and have received help from the Lord in, wherein I am truly willing (in faithfulneſs and tenderneſs) to be helpful to any of you that ſtand in need thereof, as the Lord ſhall give me ability and opportunity. It is this: Among other things, wherewith the enemy endeavoureth to reproach thoſe whom the Lord hath ſent forth among us, he maketh uſe of this, as if they wanted bowels and tenderneſs. Now, friends, I beſeech you to conſider it, that the enemy may not thus enter you. Did not the Lord conſider of his work, and whom he ſent forth in this his ſervice and labour of love? Doth he not know the need of bowels and tenderneſs in them, and would he not eſpecially furniſh them therewith? Yea, have they not bowels from and in the Lord? And doth not the eye that is open ſee and acknowledge their bowels, and bleſs the Lord for them? I have lately been often warmed in the true ſenſe of it, and have felt that therein I have not bleſſed his name in vain; but the thing is ſo in the ſenſe of truth, and ſo acknowledged before the Lord in that which erreth not: only as true judgment and ſeverity hath its proper place in the Lord, as well as his mercy, and is made uſe of by him towards his people, as all by experience know; ſo muſt it be in them alſo who bear his image; who muſt know, in his wiſdom and authority, whom to ſmite with his rod and ſharp reproofs, and when and whom to cheriſh in the tenderneſs and meltings of love. And this is alſo love and tenderneſs, (and hath ſweet and precious virtue and uſefulneſs

neſs in it, both for the recovery and reſtoring of thoſe whoſe condition calls for the ſharp ſtroke, and for the preſervation of the reſt) though it doth not ſo appear to that which by no means can endure the judgment, but would have the tenderneſs and mercy which belongs not to it; for the mercy is to the broken, to the humble, to the meek, to the afflicted, and bowed-down-ones under the ſenſe of judgment; not to the ſtiff and ſtubborn againſt the righteous judgments and teſtimonies of the Lord. And, my friends, conſider, could the Lord carry on his glorious work in the hearts of his children without his judgments? Or can they, who are ſent by him, poſſibly carry on his work among his people, without making uſe of his pruning-knife, to cut off that which ſprouted out unnaturally and unſeaſonably, which (if it be let alone) will draw away the ſap from that which ſhould be fed and nouriſhed with it. Dear friends, the Lord give you a true ſenſe, that in his light, life, wiſdom, and preſence, ye may juſtify what is of him, diſcerning between things that differ; and not call any thing that is evil (as the tenderneſs which is out of him is) good; nor any thing that is good (as the judgment and ſeverity which is of him is) evil; but may rightly diſtinguiſh between the nature of things, knowing every thing that is of God, and owning it in its place.

Ayleſbury priſon, the 29th of the
Sixth month, 1666.

ONE

ONE MORE
TENDER VISITATION
TO THE
MEN of this GENERATION,
SENT TO THEM IN
Bowels of LOVE and Tender COMPASSION,
Before their DAY be over.

Oh! that thoſe who read this might read with a right underſtanding, and have a true ſenſe of what is here propoſed for the good of their ſouls.

IF there be a God, and if this God hath let down a principle of life from himſelf into the hearts of the ſons of men, to gather them out of the world unto himſelf by; and if we have been directed to, and enlightened by, this principle, and have heard his voice, and been gathered to him in it, and therein have been taught his true ſpiritual worſhip, and drawn out of the worſhips, faſhions, cuſtoms, and ways of the world, who are eſtranged from God, and walk in their own wiſdom, ſaitsfying the luſts of the fleſh, and of the mind, and doing what is right in their own

own eyes: I ſay, if it be indeed ſo with us, then that which any do againſt us, in this reſpect, they do againſt God. The riſings of heart againſt us, the hard words and reproaches, the contriving to deſtroy or root us out of the land, the making and executing ſharp laws againſt us, &c. all this, and whatever elſe is done againſt us on this occaſion, muſt needs be done againſt him.

And what will this produce? Will it not alſo engage the wiſdom and power of the Lord againſt you? He may let us ſuffer long, and let you be hardened againſt us, as if we were not of God, by the ſlips and fooliſhneſs of ſuch who have ſeemed to be of us, but have not kept to his truth; yet ſtill thoſe that keep to the Spirit and truth of God, are of God, and he is tender of them. And if he that touched Iſrael after the fleſh, touched the apple of his eye, what doth he that toucheth his ſpiritual Iſrael? We are content and quiet under what the Lord ſuffers to befall us from you; but ye will find, in the end, it will not be well for you to deal ſo with us. The Lord hath a ſpiritual crown, dignity, and dominion in the hearts of many in this nation; why ſhould he not enjoy it? Why ſhould not men let him enjoy his heavenly rule, who giveth to them their earthly, and who can take it from them when he pleaſeth? See Dan. iv. 32. and 35.

Therefore, my dear countrymen (and ye eſpecially that are in authority) conſider, oh! conſider before it be too late. I hope, I hope (though the provocations have been very great) that it is not yet too late for many of you to find a place of repentance and remiſſion with the Lord. If ye can plead ignorance before the Lord, and that ye have not known what ye have done herein, he pitieth that, if ye yet hearken to his counſel and reproof, and return unto him. He hath power to deſtroy this nation; he hath power to do what he will in this nation. Oh! fear before him, and take heed of fighting againſt him, before whom none can ſtand.

Alas!

Alas! if ye knew what we were doing, while ye are afflicting and perſecuting us for our ſubjection to the Lord, ſurely it could not but melt and overcome you; even how we have been mourning and wreſtling many times with our God, in earneſt prayers and ſupplications to him for you; not that we might eſcape your wrath, (which he enableth us to bear) but that ye might eſcape his fury, and terrible indignation, which we know is ready to break forth, and that ye will not be able to bear it, when it doth break forth; but it will purſue, overtake, break to pieces, and ſcatter, and there will be none to deliver.

Are not theſe things ſerious? Are they not true? Are they not written in love? Why ſhould they not take place in you? Oh! come out of the circle and miſt of darkneſs, that ye may ſee the truth of them. If ye be not in the nature of Chriſtians, do not deceive yourſelves, and provoke God, in taking the name unto you. If ye be true Chriſtians, do not judge or walk as men, even in and according to the wiſdom of the earthly principle; but feel that principle which is of God, and in that wait for, and learn to hear and know the voice of God, and that will lead (out of all profane ways, out of all ſuperſtitious ways, yea, out of all the ways that man's fallen wiſdom hath taught and erred in) into the way of true and ſound judgment, where the true reformation within will be witneſſed by you, and the true reformation without brought forth through you, (thus acting) and no ſeparation or rent from you heard of by them that fear the Lord.

But till then, the principle of God, the life of God in the heart, the pure wiſdom which is from above, cannot own that which is from below, in its fall, in its ſeparation from the true; but muſt remain diſtinct from it, and a faithful witneſs againſt it. And I ſay again and again, in the love and fear of God unto you, take heed how ye perſecute this in any, or any becauſe of this: for it will lie more heavy upon you

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in the day of God's pleading with you, and executing his righteous judgments, than all your other ſins. If ye have ears to hear, oh! hear, and caſt up your accounts, making your peace with God before his wrath break forth againſt you like a flood, which none can ſtop.

Feel my love, and the meltings of my ſpirit for you before the Lord; and be not hardened againſt the truth, leſt ye remember my words, and the warnings of many of the precious ſervants of the Lord, to the increaſe of your grief, and not to your benefit, in the day of your calamity.

By ISAAC PENINGTON.

Written in Ayleſbury priſon, 16th of 5th month, 1666.

CONCERNING THE

CHURCH:

OR, OF THE

CHURCH STATE

UNDER THE

GOSPEL.

WHEREBY IT MAY APPEAR

What a miſerable APOSTASY from the TRUTH hath overſpread and covered the Earth for many Ages and Generations, and how groſs and thick the Darkneſs yet lies upon it; though the Light of GOD, in his tender Mercy, hath broke forth and ſhined upon the People of his gathering, and through them hath alſo viſited the World.

The Guidance of this in my Heart was particularly and chiefly towards the PAPISTS; but I afterwards had a true Senſe that it alſo extended to the State of ſuch PROTESTANTS as had not waited on the Lord, for him (in his Wiſdom and Power) to rear up his own Building, but had ventured to build of themſelves, and ſo had reared up Churches in the ſame Spirit of Error, Darkneſs, and Apoſtaſy, which they ſeemed to depart from: againſt all which the LORD will fight, and all which he will break down, in the Day of the Revelation of the glorious Light and Power of his Truth, which will overcome, ſubdue, and reign over the Earth; not after the Manner of Men, but in the heavenly Dominion of his Life.

Written in AYLESBURY Priſon, about the Middle of the Sixth Month, 1666.

By ISAAC PENINGTON.

Whereunto are annexed

Some OBSERVATIONS upon the ETERNAL JUDGMENT, as it is expreſſed by CHRIST, Mat. xxv. 31. to the End of the Chapter.

THE

PREFACE.

BECAUSE the corruption of the Chriſtian doctrine and worſhip hath been great (yea, indeed very great) ſince the days of the apoſtles; and the judgments alſo are to be very great, becauſe of this corruption; even dreadful woes, plagues, cups of wrath, and thunders unutterable, as is expreſſed in the book of the Revelations; therefore, that men may avoid the terrible wrath of God, which is breaking and to break forth, by diſcerning and forſaking that which his wrath is againſt; therefore, I ſay, in tender bowels was it in my heart to diſcover ſomewhat of that which the Lord hath made manifeſt to me, (among many others) concerning the creeping in of this corrupt ſtate, and its getting up after the days of the apoſtles, with its continuance to this day; that men and churches may conſider their ſtate, ſee their nakedneſs, and look after the pure garment; that they may be clothed with the Spirit of the Lord, and found in the righteouſneſs thereof, that ſo they may ſtand boldly before him, when the tranſgreſſors and hypocrites (of all ſorts) ſhall have their fig-leaf coverings ripped off, and lie open to the ſtrokes of his indignation. And this I ſay to all: take heed of two things in this day of the Lord's love and vengeance; take

heed of retaining or ſetting up any thing which the Lord is coming forth againſt; and take heed of ſlighting or appearing againſt that which the Lord is preparing to ſet up. The appearance of his Spirit, the ſhining of his day, is precious, even in the meaneſt glimmerings of it. Oh! who ſhall be guiltleſs before him, who defendeth or ſetteth up any thing of man's will or wiſdom, (his ſun, moon, and ſtars, in all their glory, being to fall and loſe their ſhining) or who debaſeth the loweſt appearance of his ſeed! And if the Jews ſuffered ſo deeply for refuſing and deſpiſing Chriſt's appearance in the fleſh, what will light on thoſe who refuſe and deſpiſe his appearance in Spirit? I know this, that Chriſtians now overlook and ſlight this, as the Jews did that, and by the ſame ſnare, even by a prejudice they have drank in, that this is contrary to the ſcriptures, as the Jews then did conclude, that that coming of Chriſt then was not agreeable to, but different from, what the ſcriptures had ſaid concerning his coming. But what ſaid Chriſt then? "Wiſdom is juſtified of her children." They who then were of the Spirit, and in the Spirit, knew the voice of the bridegroom then. And ſuch alſo know it now, and rejoice in it; though the wiſe in another wiſdom (according to the ſcriptures as they think) refuſe and diſdain it; and not knowing the righteouſneſs of Chriſt in Spirit, ſet up a righteouſneſs of their own in the fleſh: for their believing (and applying to themſelves the righteouſneſs of Chriſt) out of the true limits of life, according to their own apprehenſion of things, is no other. And this muſt fall. Man's knowledge of ſcriptures, the faith of man, through his own apprehenſions, muſt fall, and man appear naked underneath, that the glorious righteouſneſs of Chriſt in Spirit, and the precious covering thereof, may be magnified over all. And in this light of life, and newneſs of nature in Chriſt, runs the blood which cleanſeth, and not elſewhere. It runs not according to mens notions, but in its own life, virtue, and power

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in the heart; where (where it is livingly felt) the iniquity is waſhed away, the ſin is gone, the everlaſting righteouſneſs appears; yea, the water ſprings, which waſheth and keepeth clean continually. Away with your notions, and empty huſks, O ſeveral ſorts of profeſſors! come to the thing itſelf, or rather wait on the Lord to be led to it, that ye may feel the ſeed, the pure ſeed, the living ſeed, the Holy One of God, and may know its planting and growth in you, and your unclothing and emptying of all elſe, that ye may be clothed upon, and filled with it. And in the ſenſe of it, and unity with it, ye will own and love what comes from it, and rejoice in all the ſpringings of its light, either within or without.

OF THE CHURCH STATE UNDER THE GOSPEL.

THE Jews church ſtate under the law was precious; who, walking with God according to the covenant of the law, were an holy people, nigh and dear unto God above all other people. But they provoked him ſo continually and grievouſly, that inſtead of bleſſings, they drew plagues upon themſelves, and were at, laſt, by his righteous judgments, made deſolate, and cut off from being any longer his ſelect nation and people.

The church ſtate of the Chriſtians under the goſpel is much more precious and glorious, they being gathered into the ſubſtance of that, whereof the Jews ſtate had but the ſhadow. The preſence of God, the manifeſtation of his life and power is more inward and bright among them; their union with him more cloſe, their communion and joy more full, he tabernacling among them, dwelling and walking with them, and advancing them into the ſtate of ſons and daughters; whereas the law ſtate was but a ſtate of ſervitude. And their ſtanding alſo is more firm; the covenant wherein they ſtand being more able to hold them together with God than the other was. The ſtanding of the other was by the works of the law, which they were to obſerve and live. The ſtanding of theſe is in the

the faith, which is from the power, which worketh their works in them and for them.

Yet, as they are gathered in the faith, ſo their ſtanding is in the faith, and out of it they cannot be preſerved. So that (before they are eſtabliſhed) there is a poſſibility of their fall from the faith, wherein their ſtanding is, and from the power which preſerveth. And if they ſo fall, they are liable to be cut off, as the Jews were, as their apoſtle tells them, Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22. In the fear, in the humility before the Lord, in keeping to the faith, their ſafety is; but if they become high-minded, becauſe of their ſtate and church privileges; if they think their ſtanding ſo ſure, as that they are out of the danger of falling, then they are out of the fear, out of the humility, out of the faith which preſerves; and being out of the preſervation, muſt needs fall, and ſo continuing, muſt needs be cut off.

Now the ſame apoſtle doth not only warn them to take heed of falling from the faith, but afterwards expreſsly foretells of a falling away, even that there muſt come ſuch a thing amongſt them alſo; yea, and of ſuch a falling away from the truth and power of life, as ſhould give antichriſt advantage to get into God's temple, and ſit there as God, taking upon him the power and authority, as if he had the true power and authority of God, 2 Theſſ. ii. 3, 4. And what doth he then? Doth he not corrupt all, even as God's power and preſence purifies and preſerves all? And as he ſhews himſelf as God, ſo doth he not alſo ſhew forth his church as God's church? Yea, it goes on in the world as God's. All that drink of his ſpouſe's cup take it to be ſo; who are very many and great ones, even kings and inhabitants of the earth, peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, (Rev. xvii. 2. 15. and chap. xviii. 3.) and none are able to diſcern that it is not ſo, but thoſe that are anointed with the true eye-ſalve, which giveth to ſee through his deceits, 1 John ii. 20. For he cometh "with all de-"ceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs" (1 Theſſ. ii. 9, 10.);

10.); he maketh the church (after he hath got poſſeſſion of it, and made it his, ſitting as God in it) appear as like the true church as poſſibly he can, that he may hold up his myſtery of deceit in the world, which if once diſcerned, would ſoon fall, and come to nothing, 2 Theſſ. ii. 7. Rev. xvii. 5.

To open theſe things a little more fully and further from the ſcriptures, that they who yet cannot read otherwiſe may read them there, and come in ſome meaſure to the acknowledgment of the truth, and wait for the power from on high, from whence is the true faith, (wherein is the true church and its ſtanding) for want of which the world is become a wilderneſs; full indeed of profeſſion, but very empty of the nature and life of Chriſtianity.

Chriſt tells his diſciples, that falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets ſhould come, and deceive many; yea, that they ſhould prevail ſo far as, if it were poſſible, to deceive the very elect, Matt. vii. 15. and chap. xxiv. 11. 24. The Lord God hath ſent forth his truth, and now after it he ſuffers to go forth a power of deceit, a mighty power, even having all manner of deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in it, 2 Theſſ. ii. 9, 10, 11. And it works according to its power, it gathers all its own every where. Not one, but he that is of the elect ſeed, can ſtand before it. Now the reaſon why God ſuffered this to go forth, was in judgment. Men had dallied with the truth, and took up a form of godlineſs, and rejected the power; therefore God withdraws from the form, and ſuffers the unclean ſpirit to enter it, and the uncircumciſed nature of man to ſhelter itſelf there. It aroſe alſo from the devil's ſubtilty, who, finding himſelf diſpoſſeſſing of his kingdom, played this maſter-piece, both to ſave what he could at preſent, and to recover the reſt again in proceſs of time. He (in his apoſtles and miniſters) takes upon him the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſending them forth as the miniſters of righteouſneſs (2 Cor. xi. 13. 15.); but for all that, they were ſtill of the worldly nature, of the worldly root, ſpirit, and principle; and ſo by them

them he brings forth Chriſtianity (or the profeſſion and obſervation of the Chriſtian religion) in ſuch a way as would pleaſe the worldly mind and nature; and bringing it forth ſo, he gathers to him all that were not gathered and preſerved by the power, and ſo becomes the greater body and church in view, and the reſt (as to the outwardneſs of their church ſtate) are fain to give way, and retire into the power, out of their former place and ſtation in the world, Rev. xii.

Now as Chriſt had ſaid that falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets ſhould come; ſo John ſaid they were come, 1 John ii. 18.; and alſo ſhewed from whence they came, "They went out from us," ver. 19. They were ſuch as came into the form among us, but were not begotten of the life, nor ſubject to the power with us. And there were many of them, chap. iv. 1. and ſuch they were as had a great power of deceit, and came therewith to ſeduce them, 1 John ii. 26. Therefore he bids them (in the unction which they had received, ver. 27. which ſearcheth and diſcerneth all) "try the ſpirits." If their ſpirit (or the ſpirit that is in them) confeſs Chriſt, (who is the power of the endleſs life, the ſum, ſubſtance, and end of all that which ſhadowed forth life) they are of God, chap. iv. 2. But if their ſpirit confeſs not Chriſt come in the fleſh, though they may ſeem ever ſo much to preach him, they are not of God, ver. 3. Now whoſe ſpirit confeſſeth Chriſt? Surely his only that is ſubject to him. He that preacheth Chriſt in words, and denieth him in works, (whoſe works are not wrought in Chriſt, nor brought forth by Chriſt) his confeſſion is but outward, but formal; it is no true confeſſion. It is but the confeſſion of his mouth, not of his ſpirit; and he is, in the ſight of God, not a confeſſor, but a denier, of him: and whoſo is enabled by God to try ſpirits (and waiteth in his light and anointing to try ſuch) findeth him to be ſo, and notwithſtanding all his fair words and ſpeeches of Chriſt, and his pretending to be his miniſter, Rev. ii. 2. For men with fine words, and fair ſpeeches may deceive the hearts of the ſimple; but

but they cannot deceive thoſe to whom God giveth ability to try ſpirits. Could the devil deceive Chriſt, when he ſaid, "Thou art the Son of God?" No; Chriſt knew his ſpirit to be againſt him, notwithſtanding thoſe words. And can the miniſters of antichriſt deceive the elect of God, when they preach up Chriſt (in words) to be the Saviour and Redeemer, and yet own not that life and power which ſaves, but perſecute it wherever they find it? No; the ſame Spirit of Chriſt in them diſcerneth quite through their words to their ſpirit. "My ſheep," ſaith Chriſt, "hear my voice," John x. 27. Man may be deceived, and caught in the ſnare; but the elect, the ſheep, know the voice of the Shepherd from the voice of the ſtranger. If the ſtranger ſay, Chriſt is the Son of God; though he believes and owns the thing, yet they receive it not from his mouth. Well; whence are theſe falſe prophets and falſe Chriſts? "They are of the world." That is their root. Thence they come. They are of the worldly ſpirit, the worldly wiſdom, the worldly nature, only clothed outwardly with a profeſſion and ſhew of the doctrine and practices of Chriſt and his apoſtles. And what do they do? "They preach "worldly things." They ſuit their doctrine to the worldly nature, principle, and ſpirit. And what is their ſucceſs? "The world heareth them," 1 John iv. 5. The earthly wiſdom in man falls in with them, judges them to be right, owns them, ſets up their way of Chriſtianity and worſhip in the world; and thus the world become Chriſtians. Thoſe which came in the name of Chriſt, the world could not receive. ("He that knoweth God, heareth us;" not the world, 1 John iv. 6.) There were but a few (in compariſon) gathered here and there then; a few in one place, a few in another. The doctrine that comes forth in the power, ſcatters the worldly part. Man's wiſdom, man's nature, cannot receive it, in the love and life of it. But when theſe falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets come, the world can turn Chriſtians; then a whole city, or a whole nation, can preſently become a church.

Why

Why ſo? Theſe come in that which the world can receive, which their wiſdom can anſwer, fall in with, and ſubject to. Theſe can bring forth a croſs, which the world can like, fall down, and worſhip; but the croſs of Chriſt they cannot; for that crucifies and ſlays the worldly nature, wherever it is felt, taken up, and ſubjected to. The way of life is ſtrait and narrow, and few there be that can walk therein; but a broader way more may walk in. The true church is not eaſily found or entered into; but the falſe is wider and far larger; yea, deſirable to the fleſh. The true church is circumſpect, will admit none but in the way of God's wiſdom and power; but the falſe church proſtitutes and thruſts herſelf upon all. She meets men in the ſtreets, and forceth them into her bed; whereas the voice of the true church is, wait for the preparation, for the being changed by that which giveth entrance into the truth; for the builder of the church is God, Heb. iii. 4. (he builds this houſe by Chriſt, ver. 6. as by Moſes he built the houſe under the law) and he is the ladder to the building, Acts ii. 47.

So Paul alſo writing to Timothy, tells him of perilous times in the laſt days, 2 Tim. iii. 1. For when the laſt days come, and the antichriſts and falſe prophets appear, then men are in great danger of being deceived, and of making ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience. Then he that is not in the truth, but only in the form and outward appearance, will be ſwallowed up by the deceit, and take up his dwelling in the form without the power; for ſo ſaith the apoſtle concerning them, ver. 5. they have a form of godlineſs, but deny the power of it. And all manner of wickedneſs will ſhelter itſelf under this form; *Self-love, covetouſneſs, boaſtings, pride, blaſphemy, diſobedience to parents, unthankfulneſs, unholineſs*, &c. ver. 2, 3, 4. and indeed what not? For what is ſo evil, which cannot ſhelter itſelf under that form of religion and profeſſion, where there is not the true power and life of religion to reſiſt and ſubdue it?

Now

Now mark; When theſe antichriſts and falſe prophets had got up into a body and ſtrength, gaining authority and credit in the world; what did they then do, but endeavour wholly to cruſh and ſuppreſs the truth, with thoſe that abode ſtill in it? Then the dragon, with his angels, fighteth with Michael and his angels. They had ſtill been fighting with the apoſtles and miniſters of Chriſt, endeavouring to diſparage them, and eat out their eſteem in the churches, as 2 Cor. xi. but they could not prevail; Satan, in all his enterprizes, fell down, like lightning, before the glory and power of Chriſt in his apoſtles and miniſters. But when the apoſtaſy increaſed, and the churches provoked their preſerver, growing cold in love, and faint in faith, (being lifted up with their gifts, thinking highly of themſelves, and their ſtanding to be firm) and many received not the love of the truth, but only a profeſſion of it for by-ends, &c. then the Lord began to threaten ſome with the removal of their candleſtick, and did afterwards proceed in judgment, even to let the falſe prophets and antichriſt prevail, and ſtrong deluſions enter, that they who had dallied with the truth, might be fruſtrated of the ſalvation they expected by it, meeting with a lie (which deſtroyeth) in the ſtead of it, 2 Theſſ. ii. 10, 11, 12. And ſo God, who before built up, in his jealouſy and indignation afterwards threw down men abiding not in the faith, nor in the power, but in the form and outward profeſſion, which (ſeparated from the power) the Lord abhorreth. What he loves, he ſecures for himſelf (his holy temple, his holy altar, his ſpiritual worſhippers); and what he regarded not (which was the form and outward ordinances, now polluted) he gave to the heatheniſhly-profeſſing ſpirit; and there they worſhip, and magnify their own ſtate, prizing it by its outward glory and appearance, and not by a right ſenſe and knowledge of it in the truth. Read theſe things outwardly, in the letter, (or rather wait upon God that ye may read them, who cauſed them to be writ to that end, to be read

read and underſtood) Rev. xii. and chap. xi. 1, 2. where the battle of the dragon is related, and God's taking down his building, and diſpoſing of it according to his pleaſure.

Again mark; Antichriſt gets into the temple, (upon the falling away) ſits there as God, ruling, giving laws, and exacting obedience in the name of God: but *when was this to be?* In the laſt times, 1 Tim. iv. 1. (which would be very perilous, through the power of wickedneſs and deceit, then getting up). *When did thoſe times begin?* They began in the apoſtles days. The myſtery of iniquity was then at work, 2 Theſſ. ii. 7. Yea, ſaith John, "it is the laſt time;" by the coming of the antichriſts and deceivers we know it to be ſo, 1 John ii. 18. Chriſt ſaid, they ſhould come; John ſaid, they are come; Paul ſaw them then at work in the myſterious power of darkneſs. But they could not carry their work through, the Spirit and power of Chriſt in his apoſtles ſtood ſo much in the way; but after they were removed out of the way, antichriſt got up his myſtery of deceit apace. Well, *how long doth he reign?* Even till the very coming of Chriſt in his Spirit and power; yea, there is ſome remainder of him till the very brightneſs of his coming, 2. Theſſ. ii. 8. This myſtery of iniquity hath power and authority over all the wiſdom of man; but the appearance of Chriſt, in the ſpirits of his people, hath power over it, and tormenteth it, by opening its nakedneſs, and cauſing its darkneſs to appear; and the brightneſs of his coming ſhall quite diſſolve and ſcatter it. For it is but a miſt of darkneſs, it hath no being in the truth, nor can it ſtand before the truth. So Babylon is found ſtanding at the very laſt; juſt before the breaking forth and coming down of the New Jeruſalem, and the marriage of the Lamb with his bride, Rev. xix. 6, 7. *What is Babylon?* A myſtery of iniquity, in a form of godlineſs. A profeſſion, a people, a religion, that ſeem to ſet up Chriſt; but ſet up another nature, ſpirit, and power in his ſtead. A church that is not of God, not formed

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in his divine wiſdom, not brought forth in his light and power, and in the ſeaſon of his will; but of man, and by man, that can go no further in religion than the number of a man. Sion, under the goſpel, is not literal, but myſtical; and ſo is Babylon alſo, who is the mother of fornications, who teacheth her daughters to adulterate from the life and from the power, who never knew the marriage of the Lamb in his Spirit, nor his pure bed of life, but enter into the chambers and bed of a ſtrange ſpirit.

Queſt. *But what is the ſtate of the church all this while, from this hour of corruption, till the coming of Chriſt in his Spirit and power?*

Anſ. A ſtate of deſolation, a ſtate of widowhood, a wilderneſs-ſtate; where her living body is not diſcerned by the vulturous eye; but her children, whenever they appear witneſſing for her, are perſecuted, hunted, afflicted, and ſometimes ſlain. This bloody church, which comes from the red dragon, and rules in his ſpirit and nature, drinks the blood of the lambs and martyrs of Jesus, who in their ſeveral ages are his faithful witneſſes, and love not their lives unto the death. And here the truth, and that which hath appeared of the true church in the world, for ages and generations, (ever ſince this night of the dragon's and antichriſt's darkneſs, and his ſitting in the temple under an appearance of light) hath only been to be found, even among the perſecuted ones, who have been dear to God; of whom the profeſſing world hath not been worthy, no not at all, of that heavenly life, ſpirit, and power, which dwelt in them, and through which they have been able to teſtify for the truth, and bear up their heads againſt the malice and perſecutions of their enemies, Rev. xii. 11, 17, &c. and chap. xi. 3, 7. chap. xiii. 15, 16, 17. chap. xiv. 12. chap. xvii. 6.

Now, for a cloſe, There are a few queſtions in my heart, briefly to propound and anſwer, which it may pleaſe God to reach forth to his witneſs in ſuch, who in diſtruſt of themſelvés and their own wiſdom, ſhall wait

wait upon him for underſtanding. The queſtions are theſe. Firſt, What a true church is? Secondly, How a true church may be known? Thirdly, How a true church may continue ſo? Fourthly, How a church may loſe its ſtate and being? Fifthly, When a church hath loſt its ſtate and being?

Queſt. 1. *What is a true church?*

Anſ. A true church is a truly ſpiritual body, gathered out of the world, or worldly nature and ſpirit, into God's Spirit and nature, there to live and walk with him, and worſhip him in ſpirit and truth, and for him to tabernacle in and walk among, and fill with his glorious preſence and powerful life, Eph. ii. 21, 22. 1 Pet. ii. 5. John iv. 23. 2 Cor. vi. 16. It is not the profeſſion of the truth makes a true believer; nor is it a company of profeſſors makes a true church; but their proceeding from, and union with, the truth itſelf; and their abiding in the life and power of that which they profeſs, Eph. iv. 16.

Queſt. 2. *How may a true church be known?*

Anſ. There muſt be ſomewhat in man to know them, and ſomewhat in them to be known by. That in man which knows them, muſt be ſomewhat of God in him; for that which is of man cannot meaſure or judge of the things of God. As the worldly wiſdom and ſpirit could not know Chriſt formerly; ſo neither now can it know his church. Many may appear to be churches of Chriſt, and yet not be ſo; and that which is ſo, may not appear ſo. In this caſe, who ſhall diſtinguiſh? Not he that judgeth according to the appearance, but he that judgeth the righteous judgment. Therefore it is not for every man to take upon him to judge which is the true church; but firſt to wait upon God to be led into that, and in ſome meaſure born of that, which giveth ability to judge. "Wiſdom is juſtified of her children;" but of others ſhe is condemned for fooliſhneſs, and the fooliſhneſs juſtified in her ſtead.

And there is alſo ſomewhat for the church to be known by, which is that which diſtinguiſheth her

from all other aſſemblies and gatherings; which is the nature, life, and preſence of the head with her and in her. This none hath, but the true church, the gathered body, the ſeparate body of the Lamb, which is of his fleſh, and of his bones, Eph. v. 29, 30. Her huſband is with her, his life is in her: for ſhe is a living body, or gathering of living ſtones. So that find the true life of the Lamb any where, there is ſomewhat of his church; find a gathering in his life, name, and power, there is his church, and he alſo. "For where two or three are gathered together "in my name, there am I in the midſt of them," Matt. xviii. 20.

Queſt. 3. *How may a true church continue ſo?*

Anſ. By abiding in the Spirit, life, and power, that gathered and built them up into a church. This firſt gave them their being; and this ſtill preſerves them in their being (if they abide till they be perfected and eſtabliſhed); but falling or being cut off from this, they wither, die, and come to nothing. Even as a diſciple, departing out of the vine, making ſhipwreck of the faith, loſeth that which made him a diſciple or Chriſtian, John xv. 6. ſo a church, departing from the Spirit and life of what they profeſs, languiſh by degrees, even till their life be wholly extinct, and they wholly loſe that ſtate and being which they had by their gathering. Thus the churches in Aſia, beginning to corrupt, grew formal, lukewarm, dead, &c. were warned to repent and ſtrengthen that which remained, leſt they were ſpewed out, the candleſtick removed, &c. Rev. ſecond and third chapters.

Queſt. 4. *How may a church loſe its ſtate and being?*

Anſ. Several ways: as firſt, By departing from the truth and ſimplicity of the goſpel; letting in doctrines, principles, obſervations, cuſtoms, and practices, which are not of the pure Spirit, nor in the unity of it; but from the corrupt ſpirit, and which corrupt the minds of them that are entangled in them. Corrupt doctrines, corrupt principles, corrupt practices, &c. they all have of the nature and poiſon of death in them; and

and as they prevail, they bring death upon (and engage God againſt) that perſon or church where they get dominion. See what danger one corrupt doctrine of the Nicolaitans brought the church of Pergamos into, even of God's coming forth with his ſword and fighting againſt her, Rev. ii. 16. And if God, who is the defender of his church, himſelf fight againſt her, how ſhall ſhe ſtand?

2. By negligence and ſluggiſhneſs in the truth; by this means alſo life may languiſh and extinguiſh by degrees, even till death come wholly over and ſwallow it up, Rev. iii. 1, 2, 3. If the firſt love do but abate and wax cold, iniquity will be abounding, Matt. xxiv. 12. and the church will be in danger of loſing its candleſtick, Rev. ii. 4, 5.

3. By God's withdrawing his preſence and power (for theſe or ſuch cauſes aboveſaid) which nouriſheth and preſerveth. For the life of the church (as well as of a diſciple) is fed and nouriſhed from the fountain or vine; and if it miſs of the nouriſhment, its life cannot long continue. The Jews may keep up their ſacrifices, and reading of the law; but yet they are a dead people to God, after their cutting off from the olive-tree. And the Gentiles may worſhip in the outward court, and keep up the outward ordinances, after God's rejecting and cutting them off alſo, and be as dead to God therein, as the Jews in theirs, Rev. xi. 1, 2. and Rom. xi. 21, 22.

4. By their liſtening and yielding to the power of the enemy, who quickly deceiveth, (with his lies, inſtead of the truth) deſtroyeth, and layeth waſte ſuch buildings, where God in his juſt judgment letteth him forth upon them. For the gates of hell will prevail againſt that building, which the arm of Chriſt is not ſtretched forth (or ceaſeth) to defend. And as the defence of every particular building upon the rock, is in its abiding there, and ſubjecting to the head; ſo the defence of larger gatherings, or churches, is no otherwiſe. As their union and gathering is, ſo is their ſtanding; to wit, in believing and giving up to

their leader; hearkening to his voice, and obeying him only. But if they hearken to a ſtranger, if they hear another voice than his; if they follow another ſpirit, letting in his lies and deceit; they cannot keep their ſtanding in the truth, but in ſo doing depart from it, and loſe the promiſe and protection of it. For, as before, by God's gathering them from the ſpirit of darkneſs, they became his, and met with his power, preſence, and bleſſing; ſo afterwards, being again (by any ſubtilty of deceit) gathered from the truth itſelf, into ſome likeneſs and appearance of it, which the enemy hath formed, they become the enemy's ſynagogue, not God's church; into which he entereth again, and dwelleth there, in that likeneſs and appearance. And this houſe, which was once cleanſed, ſwept and garniſhed by God, being again recovered and repoſſeſſed by the enemy, becomes worſe, and more filthy in the nature of wickedneſs, than it was before. What is more pure, glorious, and excellent, than a true church of God, which is ſanctified by his Spirit, and holds forth the virtues and pure nature of his life in the world? What is more filthy and abominable, and where doth Satan more ſtrongly dwell and act, than in that which pretends to be a church, and is not? The promiſes of God are only to the ſeed abſolutely; but not ſo to any man, or ſociety of men; but as (in the tender mercy of the Lord) they are gathered into, and preſerved in, the ſeed, in the way that the Lord hath choſen and appointed. For the way of life is glorious and perfect, and the Lord will honour it; ſo that thoſe that expect to reap ſalvation from him, muſt walk and abide with him therein; for beſides him there is no Saviour; and beſides his way, there is no way of ſalvation, either for any man or church.

Queſt. 5. *When hath a church loſt its ſtate and being?*

Anſ. When its nature is changed; when it is overcome by, and gathered into, another power and ſpirit, than it was firſt gathered into by the Lord; when its ſtanding is not in the Spirit, nor after the Spirit, but in

the fleſh and after the fleſh; when its ways are carnal, its weapons carnal; when its hedge or wall is broken down, and the ſpirit of the world not kept out, but entered into it and become one with it. Then it is no longer of God, and ſeparate from the world; but one in nature, ſtate, and being with the world, Rev. ii. 9.

Theſe things are written in the love and good-will of God, that men may ſee that ſpirit, which hath bewitched and entangled them from him, with the ways and falſe appearances wherein it hath entangled them; and may wait on the Lord (in truth of heart) for his light, guidance, and power to deliver them; that ſo they may come into his holy land, and within the limits of his holy city, out of all polluted lands and buildings (where his holy nature dwelleth not, and the pure dominion of his holy life and power is not felt); that they may ſing praiſe to him among his redeemed ones, for his precious redemption; who is breaking the bonds of captivity, and redeeming his out of all the lands and countries, wherein they have been ſcattered in the cloudy and dark day; glory in the higheſt to his name for evermore.

Some QUERIES to the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, to provoke them to Jealouſy for their Good.

Query 1. HAVE ye eat of the bread and drank of the wine in the Father's kingdom, which they that have received the kingdom, and are in the kingdom, eat and drink of?

Query 2. Have ye known the heavenly Jeruſalem, and are ye come to it, as the Chriſtians were in the apoſtles days? Heb. xii. 22.

Query 3. Are ye in him that is true, and your churches and gatherings in God, and in the name of his Son? Is your being and dwelling in the eternal life?

Query 4. Have ye received the promiſe of the Father, even the excellent Spirit of the Son?

Query 5. Have ye the true faith? Do the living waters ſpring out of your bowels, according as the ſcriptures have ſaid; "He that believeth on me, out of "his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water," John vii. 38. and chap. iv. 14.

Query 6. Doth God tabernacle in you? is his dwelling among you? doth he walk up and down in your ſpirits, and ſup with you, and you with him?

Query 7. Are ye in the new covenant? taught of God, ſo as you need no man to teach you? and your ſins ſo blotted out (according to the covenant) as to hinder no good things from you?

Theſe things were ſpoken of in the law and prophets, to be fulfilled, witneſſed, and enjoyed under the power and life of the goſpel; which is not a ſtate of the names and foretelling of things, as under the law, but of the preſence and enjoyment of the things themſelves; and ſo far as ye fall ſhort of them, ye fall ſhort of the ſtate of Chriſtianity,

SOME

SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON THE ETERNAL JUDGMENT,

As it is expreſſed by CHRIST,

MATTHEW XXV. 31. to the End of the Chapter.

Obſer. 1. THE condition of Chriſt here in this world, in many of his members in their ſeveral ages and generations. He is *hungry*, *thirſty*, *a ſtranger*, *naked*, *ſick*, *and in priſon*; yea, indeed, what is there of miſery, ſhame, and reproach, which he is not expoſed to; or which they are not expoſed to, who entertain him as their Lord and King, and are faithful in their obedience and ſubjection to him? ver. 35, 36, and 43.

Obſer. 2. The notice Chriſt takes of what is done in this kind, or not done in this kind, to any of his ſuffering members; which extends to all, even the very leaſt. "Inſomuch as ye have done it unto one of the "leaſt of theſe, ye have done it unto me," ver. 40. "Inſomuch as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of "theſe, ye did it not to me," ver. 45.

Obſer. 3. The honourable eſteem Chriſt hath of his poor ſuffering members, with what eye of contempt ſoever the world looks upon them, yet he looks upon them as his brethren, ver. 40.

Obſer. 4. The different carriages of perſons towards Chriſt, in this his low condition in his members. Some gave him meat, ſome gave him drink; ſome took him in, ſome clothed him, ſome viſited and came unto him, ver. 35, 36, others did none of theſe things unto him, ver. 43.

Obſer. 5. The different judgment Chriſt paſſeth upon theſe, according to their different carriages. The one he pronounceth *bleſſed of his Father*, judging them to the inheritance of a kingdom of eternal life, ver. 34, 46. The other he pronounceth *curſed*, and adjudgeth to everlaſting puniſhment in the fire of his wrath, ver. 41.—46.

Obſer. 6. The ground or reaſon why thoſe, who did not miniſter to him, neglected him, which was their ignorance of him. They ſaw indeed, and knew ſeveral perſons to be in ſuch kind of conditions, but they did not know that it was Chriſt which ſuffered in them; this is implied in their anſwer to him, ver. 44. "When ſaw we thee an hungry, or a-thirſt, or a "ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did "not miniſter unto thee?" ver. 45.

Obſer. 7. That it will not excuſe men from the judgment, their not knowing of Chriſt in his members; but if they neglect and have not done this thing, (though they may plead ever ſo ſtrongly that they did not know any ſuch) they will incur and muſt ſuffer the judgment. The Jews cried up Moſes and the prophets, which had been before, and yet perſecuted Chriſt and his apoſtles; and many now cry up the prophets, and Chriſt's appearance in a body of fleſh, (with his death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, &c.) and alſo the apoſtles, both their words and practices; and yet perſecute him (and the ſame practices) in his preſent ſervants and members. How will theſe poſſibly eſcape this judgment?

Object. *But they that did miniſter unto him, they knew not that it was he neither, as* ver. 37, 38, 39. *Therefore*

fore they doing of it ignorantly, (as we may ſay) it ſeemeth to want its due weight, and not to render them ſo worthy of the reward, as if they had done it in a clear and diſtinct underſtanding.

Anſ. They did not know it ſo as to put ſo great a value upon it as Chriſt here doth; but they knew that they had done things of this kind, and that they had done them on Chriſt's account. But that Chriſt was ſo in thoſe to whom they did them, as he now ſpeaks; and that he would ſet ſo high an eſteem on it, that they were not aware of. Was it thou thyſelf that waſt naked, ſick, in priſon, &c. and didſt thou take all this as done to thee? This is wonderful to us, that thou ſhouldſt ſo ſet by what we poor worms did to thy ſuffering ſaints, in thy name and fear.

Queſt. *But why doth Chriſt make this the ground of the general and univerſal judgment? Men have committed many other ſins (ſome of which are in appearance far greater): why doth Chriſt mention none of them, but fix the judgment only upon this?*

Anſ. Surely becauſe this is more in his eye, and more hateful to him than them all. This argues an evil nature and ſpirit, and the joining of the mind to the wicked one, more than them all. For it plainly ſhews, that there is none of the love and nature of Chriſt in ſuch perſons; for if there be of the love and nature of Chriſt in any perſon, it will incline his heart towards thoſe which are Chriſt's, and eſpecially in their ſuffering conditions. He therefore that hath no ſenſe of thoſe that belong to Chriſt, in their ſuffering conditions, ſheweth plainly, that he hath none of Chriſt's nature in him, and ſo is not at all found in that which Chriſt comes to ſave, but in that which he comes to judge and deſtroy for ever.

Now I have three queſtions more to propoſe, which I deſire that all men that read, may judge of in that which giveth the true ſenſe and judgment of their weight.

1. If

1. If this be the cauſe and ground of the eternal judgment, whether it may not alſo be the ground of temporal judgments on perſons and nations; to wit, if there be ſuch a thing to be found in them, as neglecting to miniſter to Chriſt in his ſuffering members?

2. If there be not only this to be found, but alſo a cauſing of him in his members thus to ſuffer (a cauſing of their hunger, thirſt, nakedneſs, ſickneſs, impriſonment, &c.) whether this is not of very great force to draw down plagues, judgments, and miſeries upon a nation?

3. If there have been ſuch ſins committed, God's anger provoked, and his judgments drawn down, whether it be poſſible to ſtop them, or there can be any reaſonable hope of the diverting of them, without a deep humbling before God, confeſſing the thing in the ſight of the world, (as it hath been done in the ſight of the world) and laying ſuch a foundation for the future, as the Lord and men may be ſatisfied and aſſured that no ſuch thing ſhall be done any more? Was it not a ſhameful thing, that Jeruſalem, the outward holy city, (and chief, if not only profeſſing people of the world) ſhould ſtone, caſt out, perſecute, put to death, &c. the prophets and Chriſt of God; and ſet up prieſts and prophets of their own? And where, and by whom, are the witneſſes and martyrs hunted and ſlain? Is it not ſtill in that which is called the *Chriſtian world?* Do not they ſtrive (each ſort) for their forms; perſecuting the life and power, and thoſe which follow the Lamb therein, out of their forms, from which his life and ſpirit calleth and gathereth? Oh! that the world were awakened! Oh! that this nation were awakened! Have there not been judgments enough to awaken it? Oh! do not dally! ye have God to deal with, who hath brought his truth and people upon the ſtage; who is ariſen againſt the darkneſs, (which hath long poſſeſſed the hearts of men, and held his people in captivity under their corrupt wills

wills and wiſdom) and to bind down ſin and iniquity in men! Oh! do not ſay, "Let us break their bonds "in ſunder, and caſt away their cords from us;" but rather let every one be willing to be found by the pure light of God, by that which is holy of God in him (from the king that ſits upon the throne, even to the very beggar on the dunghill); that iniquity may be purged out of the hearts of men, and they become, not a vainly-profeſſing nation, but indeed an holy nation to the Lord; that peace and righteouſneſs, love and mercy, yea, ſweet and tender bowels may dwell within it, and flow up and down in all its borders; to the glory of God's truth, which is able to work this, (were it but let in, received, and ſubjected to in the minds of men) and to the delight and joy of the hearts of all in the nation.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

Written in Ayleſbury priſon, the 29th of the Eighth month, 1666.

CON-

CONCERNING THE

SUM or SUBSTANCE

OF OUR

RELIGION,

WHO ARE CALLED

QUAKERS,

AND THE

Exercises and Travails of our Spirits therein.

THIS is the sum or substance of our religion; to wit, to feel and discern the two seeds: the seed of enmity, the seed of love; the seed of the flesh, the seed of the Spirit; the seed of Hagar, the seed of Sarah; the seed of the Egyptian womb, the holy seed of Israel; and to feel the judgments of God administered to the one of these, till it be brought into bondage and death; and the other raised up in the love and mercy of the Lord to live in us, and our souls gathered into it, to live to God in it.

Now when the light of God's holy Spirit breaketh in upon man, and his quickening virtue is felt, then life enters into that which was slain, and there is a desire begotten in the heart to travel out of the Egyptian

tian ſtate, into the good land; that the ſoul, which came from God, might return back again to him, (out of the ſinful, wandering, miſerable loſt eſtate) and might live and walk with him, in the purity, virtue, and power of his own life and ſpirit.

But then the other birth ſtrives for its life, and Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) takes part with his Egyptians againſt Iſrael; and there is no help to the poor ſoul, but as God pours out his judgments upon that hard nature and ſpirit in man, which is of the birth of the fleſh, and receives the influences and ſtrength of its father, which harden it againſt the true ſeed. And now what a condition is this poor ſoul in! The light of God's Spirit giveth it the ſenſe of its ſtate, and the quickenings of life make it ſenſible of its bondage. There are alſo ſome deſires and longings after deliverance; but this doth but provoke the enemy; and the ſoul being yet in his territories, and under his power, he dealeth the more hardly with it, increaſing its burdens and oppreſſions daily. And oh! the outcries of the ſoul in this ſtate! how is its ſpirit pained, anguiſhed, and vexed within it; ſo that it could almoſt many times chooſe rather to lie ſtill in Egypt, than undergo the heavy burdens, oppreſſions, fears, and dangers, that it daily meets with in this ſtate!

Yet there is a ſecret hope ſpringing up in the heart from the true ſeed, which often encourageth it to truſt him, and wait upon him who hath viſited, in his pure miniſtration of judgment. For this is felt many times, (as the ſoul is made truly ſenſible by the Lord) that the judgment is not to the ſeed, not to Iſrael; but to Pharaoh and his Egyptians: and by every ſtroke of God's wrath upon them, the ſeed is eaſed, and its deliverance working out.

And ſo at laſt when the judgment is finiſhed in the land of Egypt, the ſtrength of Pharaoh and his Egyptians broken, their firſt-born ſlain, out comes Iſrael, out of the dark land, out of the houſe of bondage,

dage, to travel towards its reſting place. Then the paſchal Lamb is known and fed on; yea, it is becauſe of the blood of the Lamb ſprinkled upon the door-poſts, that Iſrael is paſſed over and ſaved, in the day of Egypt's viſitation. Oh! who can read truly, that hath not felt and been a living witneſs thereof?

But now, when the ſeed is come out of Egypt, there is not the end, but rather the beginning of its travels. Pharaoh and his Egyptians (with their horſes and chariots) may purſue again and even overtake; and there may ſeem no way of eſcape or help to the ſoul, but only to ſtand ſtill, hope in the Lord, and wait to ſee his ſalvation. Then ſhall the ſea be divided, which ſtopped Iſrael's courſe, and Pharaoh with his Egyptians (the enemies of the ſoul in this appearance of dreadful oppreſſing power) be deſtroyed and ſeen no more.

Yet in the wilderneſs, in the paſſage through the entanglements to the holy land, there are many ſtraits, trials, and ſore enemies to be met with, who will ſtrive by open force, and alſo with enchantments, to betray Iſrael; yea, there is a part yet unbrought down, yet unwrought out, at which they will be ſtriving to enter the mind. And as Iſrael forgets his God, walking out of his counſel, hearkening to that which his ear ſhould be ſhut againſt, and ſo joining to the contrary ſeed; the plagues, the judgments, the indignation and woe will be felt by him, and many carcaſes may fall there. So that there may be a great outcry in the heart, *Who can ſtand before this holy Lord God? Shall we be conſuming with dying?* Yes, there is ſomewhat muſt be conſumed with dying. Yea, if a man came ſo far, as to witneſs dominion and victory over his ſoul's enemies, the evil ſeed brought into death in him, and a poſſeſſion and inheritance in the pure reſt of life; yet if that part be not kept in the death, if there be not a praying and watching to the preſerver of Iſrael, (in the pure fear and humility) the enemy will be ſowing to the fleſh again; he will be getting ſome of his corrupt ſeeds into the heart again, (if the

ſoul

ſoul do but ſleep and become negligent) and ſo corruption will take root again, and the contrary birth grow up again, and the foxes break into the vineyard, and ſpoil the tender grapes.

So that this is our religion, to witneſs the two ſeeds, with the power of the Lord bringing down the one, and bringing up the other; and then to witneſs and experience daily the ſame power, keeping the one in death, and the other in life, by the holy miniſtration of God's pure living covenant. And ſo to know God in this covenant, (in this covenant which lives, gives life, and keeps in life) and to walk with God, and worſhip and ſerve him therein, even in his Son, in the light of his Son, in the life of his Son, in the virtue and ability which flows from his Son, into our ſpirits; this is our religion, which the Lord our God, in his tender mercy, hath beſtowed upon us. And indeed we find this to be a pure, living, and undefiled religion before God, daily witneſſing his acceptance of it in and through his Son, whoſe name is here known and confeſſed, worſhipped and honoured, according to the very heart of the Father.

This may be further illuſtrated, and perhaps made more manifeſt to ſome, by a ſcripture or two.

"The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit "againſt the fleſh; and theſe are contrary one to the "other," ſaith the apoſtle, Gal. v. 17.

Here are the two ſeeds (the ſeed of the ſerpent, the ſeed of the woman) whoſe ſtriving and fight is in man, when God awakens the ſoul; the one whereof hath a nature, a deſire, or luſt contrary to the other. Now as the one of theſe prevails in any heart, ſo the other goes down. As the one gains life and power, ſo the other is brought into death and captivity. So that this is it every one is to wait for, after they once come to the ſenſible knowledge and experience of theſe two, to feel the fleſh brought down, the luſts of it denied, the judgments of the Lord adminiſtered to it; that ſo the other may come up to live, thrive, and prevail

prevail in the ſoul, and ſo the ſoul witneſs ſalvation and redemption under its ſhadow. "Thus Sion is "redeemed with judgment, and her converts with "righteouſneſs," Iſaiah i. 27. What is Sion? Is it not the holy hill of God, whereon his Son is ſet King to reign? whereon the holy city is to be built, and God to be worſhipped in ſpirit? What condition is Sion in, when God viſits her to redeem her? Is ſhe not laid waſte, deſolate, lying in the duſt? (as Pſ. cii. 13, 14.). Well, how will God redeem her? "Sion "ſhall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts "with righteouſneſs." By bringing judgment upon that which keeps her under, upon her enemies, the contrary ſeed, God redeems her; and by bringing forth righteouſneſs (the righteous life and Spirit of his own Son) in thoſe whoſe minds are turned to her, whoſe faces are ſet Sion-ward; thus God redeems her converts. Yes, yes; it is truly felt and witneſſed; the living righteouſneſs of Chriſt revealed in the heart, and having power there, ſets free from all the unrighteouſneſs which was there before. And then, when the unrighteous-one is caſt out, and the righteous-one revealed, and the ſoul united to him, and receives virtue and power from him, then he becomes a ſervant of righteouſneſs, and doth not commit ſin, but doth righteouſneſs; "and he that doth righteouſneſs "is righteous, even as he is righteous," 1 John iii. 7. For how can it be otherwiſe, when the righteous life is revealed and brought up into dominion in him? How can the ſame righteous Spirit and life (revealed in the members, as it was in the Head) but live and act after the ſame manner in the members as it did in the Head? (Oh! that men were turned to that which would give them the certain knowledge and ſenſible experience of this!) Now this is exceeding comfortable and precious to them that are in the true travel towards it; much more to them that enjoy it.

This is the ſum of all, even to know and experience what is to be brought down into death, and kept in death;

death; what to be brought up out of the grave, to live to God, and reign in his dominion; and what to be kept in ſubjection and obedience to him who is to reign. Now to experience it thus done in the heart; the fleſh brought down, the ſeed of life raiſed, and the ſoul ſubject to the pure heavenly power, whoſe right it is to reign in the heart in and by the ſeed; this is a bleſſed ſtate indeed! For here the work is done; here the throne of God is exalted, and his King reigns in righteouſneſs and peace, and all his enemies are under his feet; and this ſon, this true Iſraelite, this redeemed-one, may wear the white robe, and ſerve God in righteouſneſs and holineſs, without fear of his enemies, (keeping in and to the covenant, which miniſters life and power abundantly) all the days of his life. For that was to be the outward ſtate of the outward Iſrael; keeping to God in the outward covenant; and it is to be the inward ſtate of the inward Iſrael, keeping to God in the inward covenant, which is a pure covenant of life and peace, of all inward and ſpiritual bleſſings and mercies in Chriſt, wherewith the ſouls are bleſſed that are obedient unto God, and walk humbly with him in this covenant. And I beſeech you to conſider, (O tender people! who are grieved becauſe of ſin and corruption in your hearts, and would fain witneſs victory and dominion over it, in the name and ſtrength of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt) whom did that prophecy of Zachariah (Luke i. 17, 72, 74, 75.) concern? What was that holy covenant? Who were to be ſo redeemed? Who were the Iſrael that were to inherit this promiſe? All the promiſes are yea and amen in Chriſt to the Iſrael of God. Why ſhould not the Iſrael of God hope to enjoy this? Even ſo to be acquainted with God's Holy Spirit, and to wait upon him, that they may witneſs it granted to them; that they, being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, might ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him (whoſe eyes are piercing, and can behold no iniquity) all the days of their lives. Surely they who witneſs

that promiſe (mentioned Iſai. xxxv. 8.) fulfilled to them, cannot fall ſhort of this. And truly the children of the new covenant can never come thoroughly to live to God till they witneſs the inward circumciſion of the heart, ſo as to love the Lord with all the heart and ſoul, Deut. xxx. 6. Now where it is ſo, the devil or luſt can find no place of entrance; and how then ſhall they be able to ſow their ſeed, and bring forth ſin? Out of the evil heart proceeds all evil; but out of that heart which is thoroughly circumciſed, to love the Lord God wholly, evil cannot proceed. If luſt be not conceived, it cannot bring forth ſin; and where the womb which conceived it is kept dry and barren, it cannot conceive again. And is not this the promiſe of the goſpel, that the womb which was once barren, ſhall be very fruitful, and bear abundantly; but the other grow feeble, and be able to bear no more? Oh! that people had experience of God's power, and did believe therein! What ſhould ſtand in the way of it? It was Iſrael's ſin of old, when they looked at their enemies, and ſaw their footing and ſtrength in the land which God had promiſed to Abraham's ſeed for an inheritance, they could not believe that they could be overcome. O! take heed of the ſame unbelief now.

CON-

CONCERNING

CHRIST;

COMING to the FATHER by him; RECEIVING him; WALKING in him; not in the Oldneſs of the Letter, but in the Newneſs of the Spirit.

AND CONCERNING

Reading the SCRIPTURES aright.

" I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no Man cometh unto the FATHER but by me," ſaith CHRIST. John xiv. 6.

MAN, in the corrupt, degenerate eſtate, is fallen from God, and hath loſt his image (the holy, heavenly image of the Father of Spirits); is driven out from his preſence, dwells in the land of darkneſs and confuſion, under the government of the prince of the power of the air, who rules in, and hath power over, all the children of diſobedience.

Now this ſhould be man's work; even to return to the Father; to come back out of the prodigal loſt ſtate, to the Father's houſe; where there is ſufficiency and fulneſs of true bread and water of life to ſatisfy every hungry and thirſty ſoul.

The way whereby a man muſt come, the truth wherein he muſt be renewed, the life wherein a man

muſt be quickened, is Chriſt, the Son of the living God; and he muſt know him as the Son of the living God, and feel him revealed in him, and received by him, and ſo walk in him the way, in him the truth, in him the life, if ever he come to the Father. He muſt not reſt in the deſcription of things; but feel and know, receive and walk in the *thing*, which by the Spirit of the Lord hath been often formerly, and is ſtill, deſcribed, in what words, and by what means, the Spirit pleaſeth. But to receive all the deſcriptions of him that were formerly given forth, or all the deſcriptions that are now given forth, that will not do; but the ſoul that will live by him, muſt receive him, and feel the ingrafting into him the holy root, the living word of God's eternal power, and muſt feel this word ingrafted into his heart, ſo that there be a real becoming one in nature and ſpirit with him. And then he is truly in the vine, in the olive-tree, and partakes of the virtue and ſap thereof; he abiding therein, and walking in the ſpirit, life, and power thereof.

Now here a man walks not, nor cannot walk, in the oldneſs of the letter; but in the newneſs of the Spirit only. Paul, notwithſtanding all his knowledge of the ſcriptures, walked but in the oldneſs of the letter, before Chriſt was revealed in him. And thoſe in the apoſtle's days, who had got the form of godlineſs, but turned from and denied the power, they walked but in the oldneſs of the letter. Yea, the church of Sardis (for the moſt part) and the church of Laodicea, who had received the right order and ordinances, and the true deſcriptions of things, and thought they were full and rich, and wanted nothing, they walked but according to the oldneſs of the letter, and not in the newneſs and power of the Spirit of life. But, alas! how far are many (who pretend to Chriſt in this day) from this ſtate, who never came ſo far as to walk in the oldneſs of the letter, from a true underſtanding thereof; but have only learned and continued to walk

in

in the oldneſs of their own apprehenſions and conceiving upon the letter.

Can theſe, in this ſtate, poſſibly underſtand truth, or know the inward, ſpiritual, precious appearances thereof, either in their own hearts, or others? Surely no. Why ſo? Why this is the reaſon: becauſe they meaſure the appearances of truth (either in themſelves or others) by their own old apprehenſions and conceivings upon ſcriptures concerning truth; which are not the proper meaſure of it. Now all ſuch are yet in darkneſs, let them pretend what they will, and grow ever ſo high in knowledge, exerciſes, and experiences after this manner; and ſo the beſt, zealouſeſt, and moſt knowing of them in this ſtate, are but blind leaders of the blind, and (thus going on) ſhall moſt certainly fall into the ditch of perdition. Oh! that men could feel that which makes rightly ſenſible, and might lay it to heart! For no man can confeſs Chriſt (how then can he receive him, and walk in him?) but by the Holy Spirit.

And he that knoweth not the Spirit rightly, knoweth not Chriſt rightly; and he that doth not know him rightly, doth not confeſs him rightly; and none can know him rightly, but by the revelation of the Father inwardly. The myſtery muſt be opened within, or there is no true knowing. The myſtery of deceit is diſcovered within, and the myſtery of life is diſcovered within alſo. And though the heart of man (in the unregenerate ſtate) is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, and no man of himſelf can ſearch or know it; yet this is not the eſtate of the true Iſraelites whom God hath cleanſed, and taught to deny themſelves daily; but they have boldneſs before that God who hath ſearched them, and removed from them the iniquities which he found therein. Yea, whoever witneſſeth Chriſt revealed within, ſhall find him revealed within for this very end, to deſtroy the works of the devil there; and he is a powerful Saviour of the ſoul from ſin, and a powerful deſtroyer of the works of the devil within.

Now concerning reading the ſcriptures, mind this: It is ſaid of the Jews, that when they read Moſes (or in reading the Old Teſtament) the veil was upon their heart; which veil is done away in Chriſt, 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15. Oh! conſider ſeriouſly, is the veil done away from thee? Doſt thou read the ſcriptures with the unveiled eye? Doſt thou read in the anointing, in Chriſt's Spirit, in the pure heavenly wiſdom of the divine birth? It was promiſed of old, that God would take away the face of the covering caſt over all people, and the veil ſpread over all nations. Doſt thou witneſs the promiſe fulfilled to thee? Doſt thou know the difference between reading the ſcriptures with the veil on thee, and with the veil off? Are the ſcriptures opened and unlocked to thee by the key of David, ſo that thou readeſt and underſtandeſt them in the light and demonſtration of God's Holy Spirit; or is thy own underſtanding and will at work of itſelf, in ſearching into the ſcriptures? If the wrong birth, the wrong wiſdom, the wrong underſtanding, be at work, it can gather but that which will feed and ſtrengthen itſelf; and if thou beeſt not in Chriſt, and doſt not read in Chriſt, the veil is not taken away from thee (for the veil is only done away in him); but thou readeſt and walkeſt in the oldneſs of thy apprehenſions upon the letter, and not in the newneſs of the Spirit; and ſo knoweſt neither the ſcriptures, nor the power of God, whatever thou profeſſeſt to men, or dreameſt concerning thyſelf. For it is no other indeed; thy knowledge, thy apprehenſions, thy faith, thy hope, thy peace, thy joy (being out of the compaſs of the pure living truth, in which the ſubſtance, the virtue, the kernel of all is compriſed and comprehended for ever) are but as ſo many dreams.

Oh! that men that are any whit tender, and have any ſincere deſires in them towards the Lord, could read that one ſcripture (Pſ. xliii. 3, 4.) ſenſibly and experimentally: "Oh! ſend out thy light and thy "truth! let them lead me; let them bring me unto "thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." (What! did

did not David know how to go to the hill and tabernacles of God, without a particular ſending forth of light and truth from God to lead him thither?) Then may men go to the altar of God, unto God their exceeding joy, and witneſs his hill and houſe their dwelling-place, when God, by his light and truth, ſent forth from him into them, leads them thither.

The ſcriptures are words, whoſe chief end, drift, and ſervice is, to bring men to the Word from which the ſcriptures came. And when men are there, then they are in the life of the ſcriptures, and witneſs the fulfilling of the ſcriptures, even the executing the righteous judgments of God upon that ſpirit, mind, and nature in them, which is contrary to his image; and the fulfilling of the promiſes and ſure mercies, which belong to Chriſt the ſeed, and to them who are gathered into, and abide in, Chriſt the ſeed. Here is the covenant, the new covenant. That which is ſaid, or thoſe things which are ſaid, concerning the covenant in the ſcriptures, are but deſcriptions of the new covenant; but Chriſt within, the hope of glory, the Spirit within, the fear within, the power of life within, breaking down and reigning over the power of ſin and death (ſo that the Lord is ſerved in the dominion and power of his own life, in the righteouſneſs and holineſs before him, out of the fear of ſin and death, all the days of our lives; ſo that captivity can lead captive, nor break the ſoul's peace no more; nay, not ſo much as make afraid thoſe that keep their habitation on God's holy mountain); here is the covenant indeed, the ſtrength and virtue whereof is witneſſed in the ſoul, as the ſoul feels the power of life revealed in it, and is made ſubject by the power of Chriſt, who reigns in righteouſneſs, love, mercy, and peace, in the hearts of thoſe whom he redeems out of the earthly nature and ſpirit, up to the mind and Spirit of his Father. And here the pſalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, the pure ſongs (the ſong of Moſes, the ſong of the Lamb) are ſung to the Father of ſpirits, to the Redeemer of Iſrael; which never were ſung,

nor can be ſung, in any part of Babylon; but all thoſe ſongs are but dreams of the night, which will be turned into howling and bitter lamentation, when the whore (that which hath whored from God, and is not in the wiſdom of his Spirit, whatever ſhe may pretend) is ſtripped, and the nakedneſs of her profeſſion and religion (with all her duties and ordinances, as ſhe calls them) made manifeſt.

Concerning the GOSPEL MINISTRATION.

IF the goſpel be not a miniſtration of words or letter, but of Spirit, life, and power; and if it was the intent of God that men ſhould not ſtick in words or teſtimonies concerning the thing, but come to the thing itſelf, and live in the Son's life and power, and feel the Son living in them, then they are greatly miſtaken, who think to gather a rule to themſelves out of the teſtimonies and declarations of things in the ſcriptures, and do not wait upon the Lord to receive his Spirit itſelf to become their rule, guide, and way. For theſe are all one; the truth is the way; the truth which lives and abides in the heart (where it is received and entertained) is the way; the rule is the guide: for God is *One.* There are many names, but the thing is *One.* The life, the power, the wiſdom in the Father, Son, and Spirit, *is all One:* yea, they themſelves are *One,* perfectly *One,* not at all divided or ſeparated; but where the Father is, the Son is; and where the Son is, the Spirit is; and where the Spirit is, there is both the Father and the Son, who tabernacle in man in the day of the goſpel. And where theſe are, *there* that is which is to be preferred before all words, which was afore them, and is in nature, Spirit, and glory above them. He that hath the Son, hath life, even the life eternal, which the words teſtify of. He that hath the Son, hath him which is true; and he that is in the Son, is in him that is true; and abiding there,

there, cannot be deceived; but he that is not there, is deceived, let him apprehend and gather out of the ſcriptures what he can. Oh! how is God glorified, and how is the redemption and real ſalvation of the ſoul witneſſed in this deſpiſed diſpenſation of truth, which God hath held forth in theſe latter days! Bleſſed be the name of the Lord, who hath hid this pure diſpenſation of life from the eye of the prudent worldly-wiſe part in every man, revealing it only to the babiſh ſimplicity which is of his Son, and which lives in him, and by him.

Concerning CHRIST's being manifeſted without, and his being alſo manifeſted within, and how both are owned by them that know the Truth.

IT is objected againſt us, who are called QUAKERS, *that we deny Chriſt (and look not to be ſaved by him) as he was manifeſted without us, but look only to be ſaved by a Chriſt in us.* To which this is in my heart to anſwer ſuch as ſingly deſire ſatisfaction therein.

We do indeed expect to be ſaved (yea, and not only ſo, but do already, in our ſeveral meaſures, witneſs ſalvation) by the revelation and operation of the life of Chriſt within us; yet not without relation to what he did without us. For all that he did in that body of fleſh was of the Father, and had its place and ſervice in the will, and according to the counſel, of the Father. But the knowledge and belief of that, ſince the days of the apoſtles, hath been very much held in the unrighteouſneſs, and in the ſeparation from the inward work of the power and life of Chriſt in the heart; which, as ſo held, cannot ſave any. But whoever feels the light and life of Chriſt revealed in him, and comes into union with God there-through, he feels the work of regeneration, of ſanctification, of juſtification, of life, and redemption; and ſo comes to reap benefit inwardly,

inwardly, and to partake of the bleſſed fruits of all that Chriſt did outwardly. Yea, he that is thus one with Chriſt in the Spirit, cannot exclude himſelf, nor is excluded by God, from the advantage of any thing, nor every thing, Chriſt did in that body of fleſh.

This indeed is the main thing, to witneſs ſalvation wrought out in the heart; to witneſs the eternal power and arm of the Lord laying hold on the ſoul to ſave it; and not only laying hold on it to ſave it, but to witneſs the working out and the effecting of the ſalvation, as really in the ſubſtance, as Iſrael of old did in the ſhadow. For as they witneſſed Moſes and Joſhua outwardly, ſo the true Iſraelite, the inward Iſraelite, the ſpiritual Iſraelite, is to witneſs that which is the ſubſtance of theſe, even the Son of God revealed inwardly. Now they were not ſaved outwardly by a bare outward believing that Moſes and Joſhua were ſent of God to ſave them; but by following them in faith and obedience to what from God they required. So to the inward Iſrael Chriſt is given for a leader and commander, who appears to the diſtreſſed embondaged ſoul in Egypt, brings out of Egypt, and ſo leads on towards the good land, and into it. Now as the ſoul follows, as the ſoul believes in his appearances, and obeys his voice in the holy pure covenant of life; ſo he works out the redemption thereof. But as unbelief and diſobedience gets up, and the heart is hardened at any time againſt his voice and counſel, and the ear open to the temptations of the enemy, the redemption thereby goes backward, and the diſtreſs and captivity returns again. This is witneſſed, known, and experienced by every true traveller towards Sion; therefore the main thing requiſite is to abide in the ſenſe of the Redeemer's power, as alſo in waiting for his motions and appearances, and in the faith and obedience thereof. For ſin gathers ſtrength, and is brought forth, by letting in and giving way to the motions thereof: and ſo alſo holineſs and righteouſneſs is brought forth and getteth ground in the mind, by hearkening and giving up to the ſtirrings and movings of God's Holy Spirit.

rit. Therefore it is of great neceſſity to every true traveller to come to a right underſtanding and diſtinguiſhing of theſe; and then that the heart may be kept with all diligence, becauſe out of it are the iſſues both of life and death. And moſt happy is he who knows the iſſues of death ſtopped, and the iſſues of life opened, and whoſe ſpirit is naked and open before the Lord, for life to ſpring up in him, and iſſue forth through him at its pleaſure. Oh! it is a precious ſtate to witneſs captivity led captive by life, and the power of life reigning over it. And truly there is as real deliverance witneſſed inwardly, by thoſe that wait upon the Lord, and are faithful to the leadings of his Holy Spirit, as ever there was by the Jews outwardly, in their faithful following Moſes and Joſhua: and Chriſt is as truly an healer of his people, in this miniſtration of life to them by his Holy Spirit, as ever he was an healer of perſons outwardly in the days of the fleſh. That (with the other miracles which he wrought then) was but a ſhadow of what he would work and perform inwardly in the day of his Spirit and holy power: and ſhall he, or can he (to thoſe that faithfully wait upon him) fall ſhort in the one, of what he ſhadowed out in the other? Nay, ſurely; it was the intent of his heart, and he will not fail to perform it, to ſave to the very utmoſt all that come to God by him, and abide in his holy, pure, righteous, living covenant. Here is the ſkill of Chriſtianity, to abide in him; and here the living virtue and pure power is felt, which overcometh all, but nothing can overcome it: but victory, dominion, glory, majeſty, and power is ſung unto him, who is King of ſaints, who reigns in righteouſneſs, and who eſtabliſheth peace and truth within his borders.

A few

A few WORDS concerning the PRINCIPLE of TRUTH; What it is, How it may be diſcerned, and How it may be purchaſed and poſſeſſed.

Queſt. 1. *WHAT is the principle of truth?* *Anſ.* It is the light, which reproves and makes ſin manifeſt. "Whatſoever doth make "manifeſt is light." Wherefore he ſaith, "Awake "thou that ſleepeſt, ariſe from the dead," &c. Eph. v. 13, 14. There is no other way of awaking out of ſleep, and ariſing from the dead, but by the light which makes ſin manifeſt. And oh! how precious is that light!

Queſt. 2. *How may the principle of truth be diſcerned?* *Anſ.* By its piercing, quickening nature, which diſcovereth itſelf in its appearances and operations. For it appears and works, not like man's reaſon, or like motions of his mind which he takes into his underſtanding part; but it appears and works livingly, powerfully, and effectually in the heart.

Man's reaſon is corrupt, dark, impure, ſince the fall; and in the hand and under the power of the wicked one. Its nature is to hide and cover ſin, not to diſcover it. Now the light of the law, which diſcovers ſin, ariſeth not hence. Who can bring the clean, pure light of the law, out of the unclean, impure reaſon of man? The light indeed may ſhine in the darkneſs; but it is no part of it, but of another nature and deſcent. It is from God's Spirit, and given to man in his love unto him, to lead him out of his dark ways and ſpirit, into the pure Spirit and way of holineſs. For the light which diſcovers ſin, is all holy and pure, like the fountain from whence it comes. Now a man that is acquainted both with reaſon and with this light, he can diſtinguiſh the nature and operations

rations of both. For there is a great difference between truth held in the reaſoning part, and truth held in its own principle. It is very powerful in the one; it effecteth little in the other. In the pure quickenings of life this diſtinction is perceived, and alſo held. Therefore our advice is to all men, to retire from all mortality, that they may come to feel the ſpring of life in themſelves, (and ſomething ſpringing therefrom into them to quicken them) and to wait to have their underſtandings opened and kept open by that; that ſo they may receive, retain, and not again loſe the capacity of underſtanding the things of God's kingdom.

Queſt. 3. *How may this principle, ſeed, or pearl, be purchaſed and poſſeſſed?*

Anſ. By dying to a man's own wiſdom and will. There is not another way. For the light is wholly contrary to man, as he ſtands in the alienation from God. It croſſeth his ſpirit, his thoughts, his deſires, his knowledge, his reaſon, his underſtanding; even all that is of himſelf. He muſt therefore conſult with none of theſe, but prefer the little, pure demonſtration of the light of Chriſt's Spirit above all theſe, and ſtand in the parting with and loſs of them all for ever. Oh! this is an hard ſaying, who can bear it? Surely none but thoſe that are taught and learn of the Father, can thus come to give up to and follow the light of the Son.

"The law of the Lord is perfect; converting (or "reſtoring) the ſoul," Pſa. xix. 7. What law was this, or what law is this? Was it the law of works in the hand of Moſes? Or is it the law of faith in the hand of Chriſt? Doth not Chriſt enlighten every man that cometh into the world? Would not God have all men to be ſaved? And doth he not give to all a proportion of the true light whereby they may be ſaved? And is it not the property of this light to convert to God? Can any man receive this, and be united to this, and it not change his nature? So that he muſt needs have a new nature, and from that new nature do

do that naturally, which the Jews, by all their endeavours without this, could never do.

Can any thing convert fallen man to God, but Chriſt? Hath any thing power to convert to God, but his pure law of life? Can Chriſt and his light be ſeparated? Can any man receive his light, and be united thereto, and not receive him? Oh! that mens hearts and underſtandings were opened by the Spirit and power of the Lord! For this is a direct riddle to all men, who have not God's heifer to plow with, to underſtand it by. And ſo for want of a true underſtanding, it is deſpiſed and rejected among the builders; but with us it is elect and precious, choſen of God, and precious in the eye of our ſouls.

Now this doth not exclude or make void any thing, that Chriſt did in his body of fleſh here on earth, or that he doth in heaven for his; but this brings unto a right, and into a poſſeſſion and enjoyment of his purchaſe. For all that are in the darkneſs, and walk in the darkneſs, have nothing to do with Chriſt in truth and reality, whatever they may profeſs, and what hopes ſoever they may feed themſelves with; but all that are in any meaſure of his light, and walk therein, they are ſo far of him, and have a right to, and ſhare in, all that he did in and from the ſame light and Spirit.

And this I dare poſitively hold forth as a ſtanding truth, which hath been ſealed unto me by conſtant experience; That no man can fall in with and obey the light wherewith he is enlightened, but he muſt deny himſelf, and take up a croſs to his own wiſdom and will; which croſs is the croſs of Chriſt, which is the power of God to the ſalvation of the ſoul. And he that takes it up daily, and waits upon the Lord therein, ſhall witneſs the power of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to the redemption of his ſoul; yea, then he ſhall be able in true underſtanding to ſay; This is light indeed, life indeed, power indeed. That powerful arm which hath ſaved me from ſin, and breaks the

the ſnares, devices, and ſtrength of the enemy before me, (delivering me daily when none elſe can, and when my own ſtrength and wiſdom is as nothing) I cannot but call Chriſt, the living power and wiſdom of God revealed in me, who will not give his glory to another. For he is the Lord God of pure power and life for evermore; and beſide him there is no ſuch Saviour. Yea, bleſſed be the name of the Lord for ever, the days of mourning after ſalvation are over with many, and the days of reaping and enjoying ſalvation are come, which ſhall endure with the Iſrael of God for evermore, Amen.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

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